Game On!

Students can learn a lot from their Xboxes. Page 42

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In Your Corner

NEA defends educators against unfair accusations on the job. SEE PAGE 28

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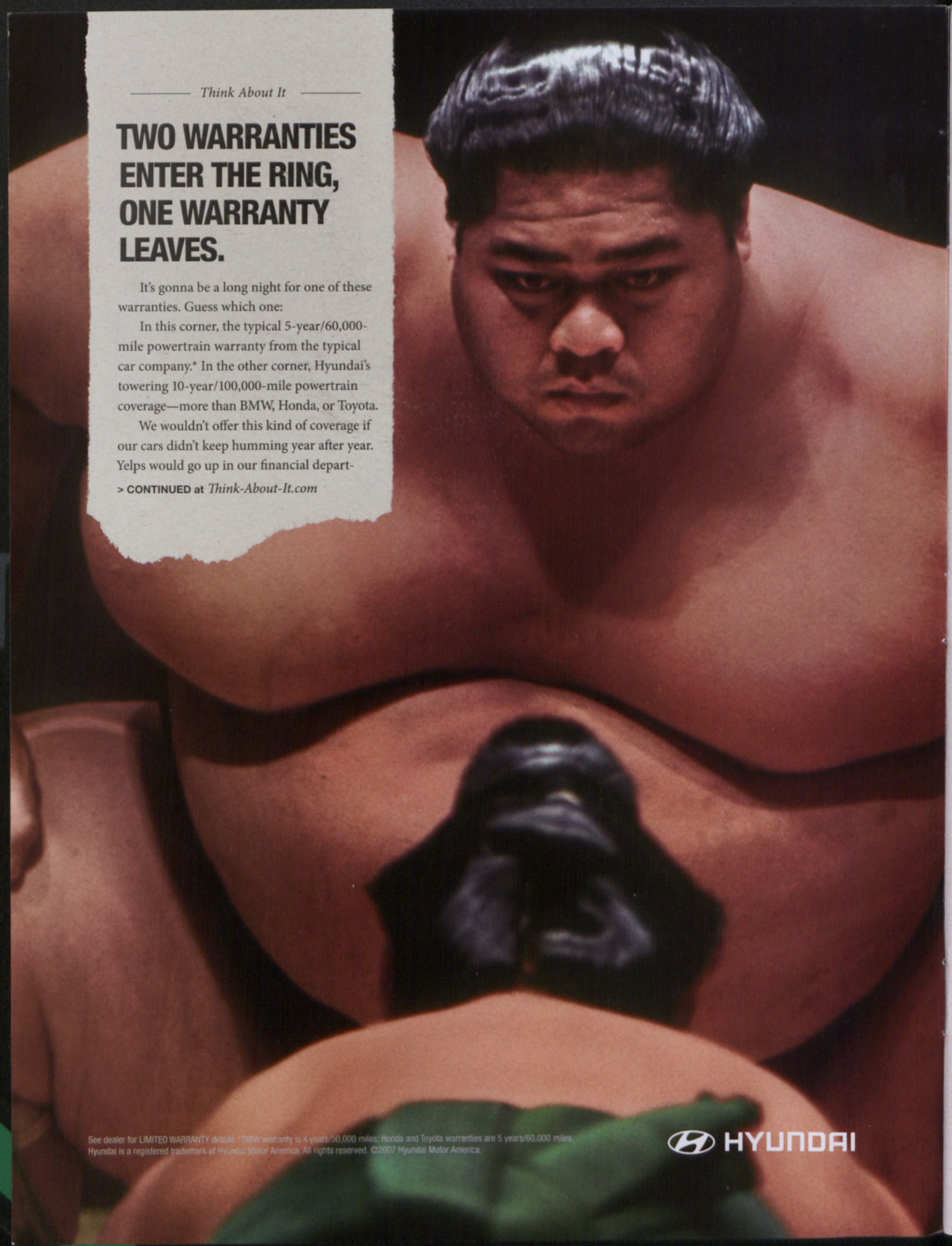
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Educators Got Game

Put the skepticism on pause. Video games just may have a place in your classroom.

NEW

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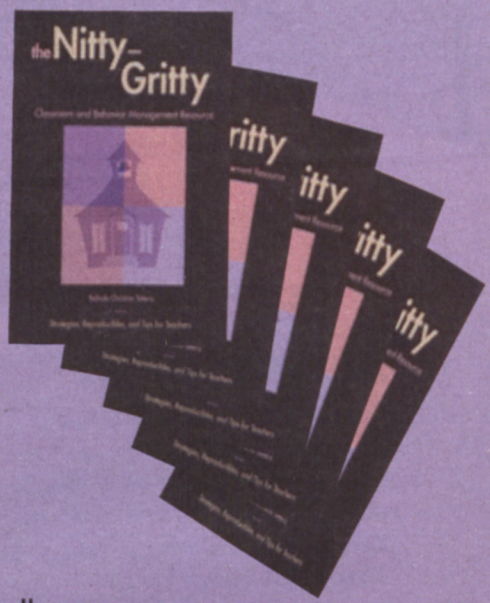
and Rowman & Littlefield Publishing!



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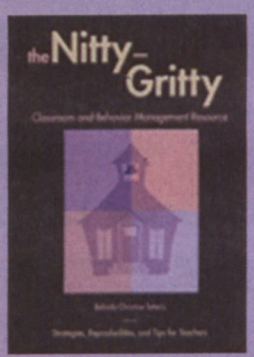

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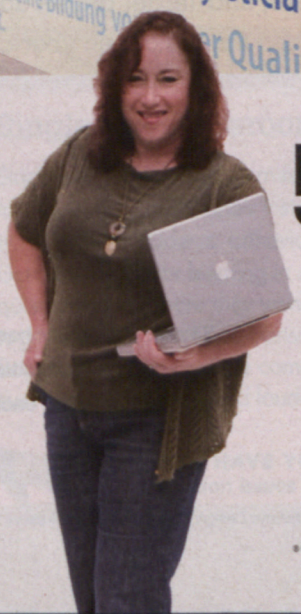

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PHOTOS PAGE 1, FROM TOP: SEAN GARDNER; SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT; PEDRO PORTAL
PHOTOS PAGE 3, CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: HOMESTUDIO (DICE) AND JOCELYN AUGUSTINO (GIRLS); MEIKO ARQUILLOS; COURTESY OF ALLISON PARSLEY; FRED GREAVES; COURTESY OF EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

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> NCLB

WHAT DOES NEA SAY ABOUT NCLB?

NEA believes three key changes to NCLB will help the law meet its worthy goal of improving student achievement. Find out what they are at www.nea.org/nclbchanges

TOP CLICKS

Pop Goes the Educator

On screen and in music, educators get some eyebrow-raising treatment. Check out the pop culture timeline, take our poll, and vent about Hollywood's take on teachers and ESPs. **www.nea.org/ref?popculture**

You've Got Game

Today's hottest video games are more complicated, and educational, than ever. Find lesson ideas and test drive hit titles at **www.nea.org/ref?games**

Art Therapy

A troubled student might have left school if not for his art therapist. See his artwork and hear that therapist's commentary. **www.nea.org/ref?artherapy**

WHAT'S NEW ON nea.org

DROPOUT PREVENTION

Too many students drop out of school. Turning things around will require all of us working together. Find out what NEA and others are doing, and join the conversation. **www.nea.org/dropout/**

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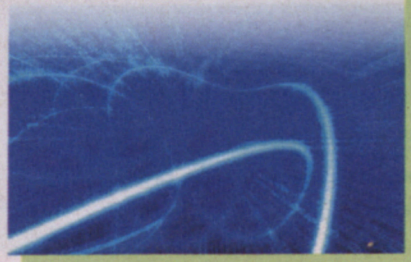

POLL

How do you teach good sportsmanship and a sense of fair play?

By modeling it	69%
Encouraging it on the bus and throughout the school	8%
Discussing news events	2%
Discussing school events	5%
Discussing hypothetical situations	15%

Is good sportsmanship a thing of the past? Share your ideas at www.nea.org/ref?sportsmanship

NOW YOU'RE TALKING

Single-sex Classrooms

Single-sex classrooms can make it easier for teachers to match their instructional style to students' behavior. Girls seem to favor learning in a quieter setting where they work together and come to consensus. Boys tend to favor a more competitive, physically active, and louder setting.

No More Sweets?

With childhood obesity on the rise,... educators need to serve their students healthy food. We need to be leaders and examples of healthful living and eating. Fruit, unbuttered popcorn, and low sodium crackers are very good alternatives to sugar, candy, and soda.

—FROM THE NEA.ORG DISCUSSION BOARDS

WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD? *Speak out on our discussion forums to debate education issues or share your stories and strategies at* **www.nea.org/forums.**

MRS. KRABAPPEL: FOX; BLOG ART: SEBASTIAN KAULITZKI; CANDY KID: QUISP1965

Meet the Parents

Concurring whole-heartedly with the spirit of your cover story in the September *NEA Today*, I am hoping to boost parent involvement in our schools. With meaningful parental involvement comes a more community-friendly school environment and improved student interest in studies and other activities, because children of all ages crave successful examples from their parents. Parents involved in school = students involved in school = improved school climate, cooperation, and academic performance.

TONY ROUSSOS
Erie, Pennsylvania

In a kindergarten classroom, we have lots of activities on a daily basis. To keep parents informed, I e-mail them daily to tell them what we did, letters and words introduced, etc. I also take many photos of the kids and e-mail them to parents. I have received great feedback with this. If a parent does not have e-mail, I print a paper copy. It's great PR.

DIANE HANSON
Northwood, Iowa

While I agree with everything you mentioned in the article, I do think you missed one point: school staff must express continual appreciation for all that parents do to help their children and school. Many teachers and principals just don't see what parents see even though many teachers and principals are parents themselves.

Everyone appreciates being appreciated and a "thank you" goes a long way. I'm convinced that if more schools made this a top priority, they'd see an increase in volunteerism. It kind of seems like a no-brainer, but I suspect this simple act gets lost in the ongoing discussions of how to get more parents involved.

P. MURRAY
Fremont, California

REWARDING STUDENTS

We, as educators, have beaten our brains out trying to motivate students, and in the end all we do is compromise the entire educational process ("Try This: How to Motivate Your Kids to Learn," September). The children that are left behind are the ones who come for an education but get the watered down version because we are too busy coming up with new ways to get everyone motivated.

Give those that want to learn every possible tool they need to succeed and maybe somewhere down the road, people will see the value of an education. Then we won't have to come up with new techniques to motivate those who don't want to learn.

ANTHONY DELFONSO
Spangler, Pennsylvania

HITTING CLOSE TO HOME

The September issue touched upon several threads that have been a part of my life recently. Like so many others, I spent well over a year deployed to Iraq in the Army National Guard ("Coming Home"). Along with the author of "Confessions of a Career Changer," I am a 50-something clergy turned teacher. And my experience in teaching has all been in alternative settings, mostly inside the gates of juvenile justice sites ("Prison Drama").

I love this work, and have been privileged to serve with truly great people. It is also an honor to work with these resilient young people who continue to dream in spite of their challenging circumstances.

DOUGLAS PECK
Naples, Florida

KEEP 'EM IN THE CLASSROOM!

I have a novel idea to make education better in America ("Upfront: Cheers and Jeers," September). Instead of pulling children from class for pep rallies for standardized testing, losing numerous days taking these tests, and countless days to prepare for these tests, wouldn't the children learn more by staying in the classroom?

TONY TOMASELLI
Cresson, Pennsylvania

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LET'S TALK

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of four ways: By Mail: Write to Letters, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 Through the Web: Go to www.nea.org/neatoday, click on "Feedback," and fill in the "Letter to the Editor" section By e-mail: Write to neatoday@nea.org By Fax: (202) 822-7206 *Letters are edited for length and clarity.*

REAL PRESTIGE

Teachers got high marks recently—54 percent of Americans classified the teaching profession as one of "very great" prestige, says a Harris Poll. Teachers ranked second only to firefighters (who came in at 61 percent) and ahead of doctors (52 percent). As a reader of this magazine, you know that rating is well deserved. So why is it that teachers like Louisiana's Carole White had to struggle—file a grievance, in fact—to convince their own school board that the district's IEP software didn't work? (See page 32.) And how can business executives rank so low (14 percent) on the Harris Poll's prestige rating yet so high on the salary ranks—while teacher annual pay has fallen sharply over the past 60 years compared with others with college degrees? (For more, go to www.nea.org/pay/index.html.) So, do you feel your profession is prestigious? Why or why not? What's contributed to that? Send us an e-mail to neatoday@nea.org (putting "My Profession" on the subject line helps) or a letter. *NEA Today* is developing spring coverage on what's influenced the status of the American educator, and we need you to influence the story, too.

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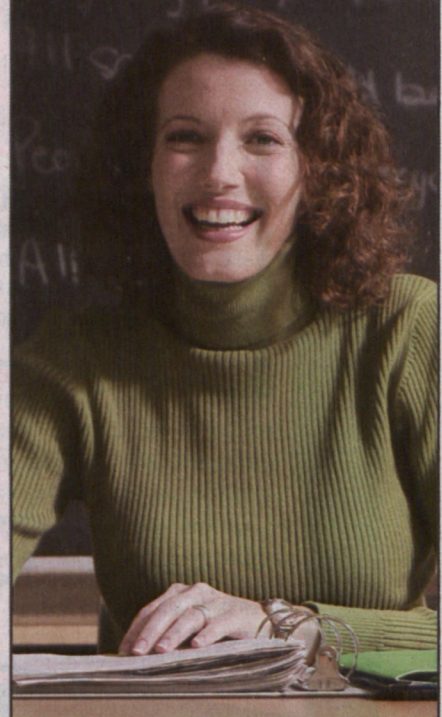

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We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a great public school for every student.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

OUR CORE VALUES

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A JUST SOCIETY. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

DEMOCRACY. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

PROFESSIONALISM. We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

PARTNERSHIP. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

COLLECTIVE ACTION. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO FAIRNESS

Most of us have heard this story: A boy's parents, puzzled by his claims that his teacher doesn't believe in homework or tests, send a note to school asking, "What is going on in your classroom?"

The teacher replies, "If you promise not to believe everything your son says about what happens in my class, I promise not to believe everything he says about what happens at home."

The story is humorous, but it also illustrates the serious fact that educators can be easy targets for false accusations. Sometimes these stories are relatively harmless, concocted by students who don't want to do their homework. Occasionally, though, false allegations threaten to ruin reputations and careers.

Like our legal system, these procedures aren't always perfect. But for the most part, they work. A case in point is the NEA member in this month's cover story who was falsely accused of inappropriately touching a student. Through the grievance procedure, the facts finally came out, and people who had supposedly witnessed the alleged incident admitted that it never happened. If the accuser's word had been taken at face value, a career and reputation would have been ruined.

The grievance process serves another purpose, too. Sometimes it takes a while for the facts to be revealed. In the meantime, an educator who is falsely accused can feel isolated, powerless, and frightened. The knowledge that the Association stands behind the quest for truth is a source of strength and comfort to those who are fighting against unfair attacks.

> "Grievance procedures are an essential tool in maintaining the standards of our profession."
>
> —Reg Weaver

Fortunately, while educators are vulnerable to false accusations, they are protected by grievance procedures. Some of these procedures are spelled out in contracts, while others are written into state laws. They all exist for the same reason—to ensure that the truth comes to light.

That is an important point to remember. As education professionals, we all want to uphold the standards of our profession. We have no reason or desire to protect anyone who has broken the law or crossed any other line.

At the same time, we recognize that students, parents, and administrators can have ulterior motives for leveling charges of impropriety against teachers and other educators. These motives can range from revenge for a poor grade to retaliation for a disciplinary action. A false allegation against school employees can be economically, emotionally, and financially devastating. The only way to sift through the false claims and the legitimate ones is with a procedure that allows all sides—and witnesses—to be heard.

Unfortunately, educators can't always count on fair treatment. But they can always count on Team NEA. We work in legislatures and with school districts for laws and contracts that guarantee fairness, and we make every effort to improve the process that determines an educator's rights. NEA and its state affiliates also devote significant resources to the legal protection of their members.

Most of our members will never need to file a grievance, but you can never underestimate the importance of a strong union. Grievance procedures are an essential tool in maintaining the standards of our profession. In the long run, that is not only good for educators—it's good for students as well.

Reg Weaver

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

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What would surprise your students if they knew you at their age?

If my kids could see me growing up in the 50s and 60s, they would say, "Wow! She was really cool!" I was a free spirit who loved having fun. I got to see Elvis in concert. I wore miniskirts and long, straight hair, and I loved to dance. I don't see my students today as being all that different from myself when I was growing up. I had to make a lot of tough choices just like they do today.

NITA JONES, *elementary school counselor, Dyersburg, Tennessee*

What usually shocks my students, especially the girls, is that we had to wear dresses. Our elementary school principal believed we would act more like ladies if we dressed the part. Of course, we climbed the monkey bars and slid into third base with every bit as much abandon as the boys did. I was a junior in high school before we were allowed to wear slacks—but no jeans!

PAT MCKINNEY, *middle school science teacher, Holton, Kansas*

My students would be surprised that I went to elementary school with no shoes and my hair uncombed, but was one of the brightest students in my class. They'd be surprised how skinny I was in middle school, and that I'd roll up my skirt and roll down my socks while waiting at the school bus stop. They'd also be surprised that I was a high school basketball star. Those were the days!

GLADYS LAKE, *special education teacher, Antioch, Tennessee*

I was raised in a very liberal atmosphere and was able to drink and smoke with the adults. I had shoulder-length hair and rode a motorcycle. When I was 17 and a junior, I quit school to join the army and had no intention of ever using my GI education benefits. That all changed when I began studying to become a minister. But I soon discovered that my ministry was not preaching, but teaching, which I've been doing for 21 years.

JIM LUDWIG, *math teacher, Cleveland, Tennessee*

My students are always surprised to learn that very few of my friends and classmates had after-school jobs during the school year. Everyone was eager to find a good summer job, but usually the only students who worked during the school year were those who had family businesses.

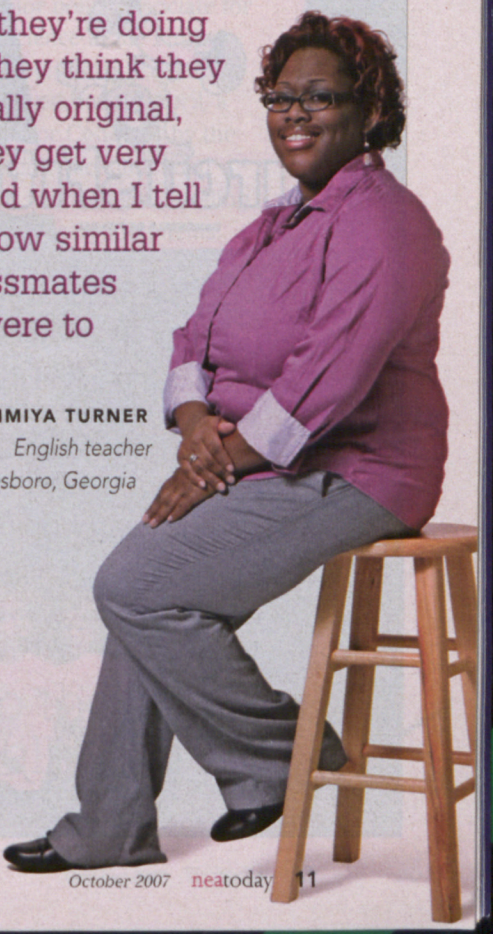
SANDRA MITRA, *AP biology and botany teacher, Fall River, Massachusetts*

If my students had seen me at their age, they'd be surprised that I was thin and wore my hair in an afro and my skirts above my knees. My friends and I dressed alike most days. They'd also be surprised that I haven't seen my middle school friends since desegregation closed our school and we were split up.

DEBORAH MONTAGUE, *principal, Jackson, Tennessee*

My students are always surprised when they realize that I know all the "cool" things they know. They think their coolness applies only to teenagers. It surprises them that when I was in high school, we did the same things they're doing now. They think they are totally original, and they get very annoyed when I tell them how similar my classmates and I were to them!

CHIMIYA TURNER
English teacher
Jonesboro, Georgia



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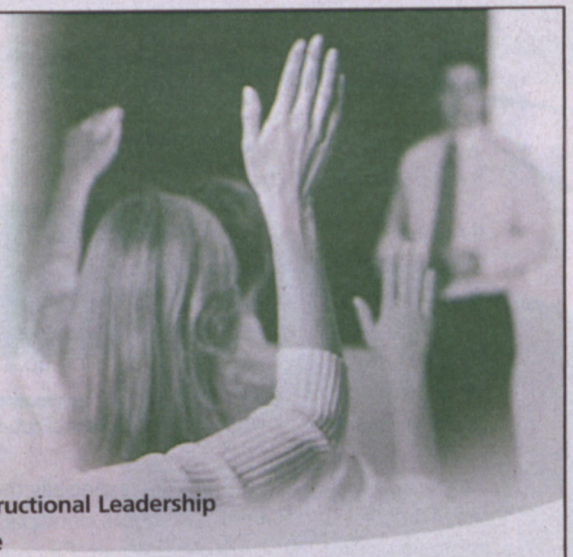

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Discover the FUNdamentals of Fitness by clicking on the For Educators button at

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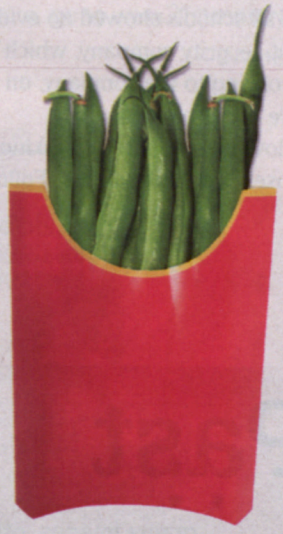
Don't put down that hot dog yet

SCHOOLS TRY NEW APPROACHES TO TACKLE CHILDHOOD OBESITY.



COMING SOON TO A SCHOOL CAFETERIA near you: soy-supplemented hot dogs. To get students eating healthier, schools in West Virginia are now making their breakfast and lunch foods with low-fat cheese and whole-wheat grains while disguising them as junk foods. So what looks and tastes like a pizza will actually be a healthier version of the food.

But the jump to healthier meals doesn't stop with nutritionally modified junk food. The Miami-Dade County School District adopted a ban on foods with trans fats before this school year. Gone are the days of extra-crispy french fries and foods with seemingly endless shelf lives. In their place are foods designed to be as healthy as possible. There haven't been any problems obtaining foods without trans fats, and the community has supported the decision, says Penny Parham, the nutrition director for the school district.

This summer, more than 7,500 cafeteria workers, managers, and food service directors filled a Chicago convention hall for the School Nutrition Association's annual conference and nibbled on low-fat fried chicken, reduced-fat mozzarella cheese, and whole-wheat pretzels.

"The rapid rise in childhood obesity rates has drawn attention to the quality of foods and school nutrition," says Joy Johanson, a senior policy associate for the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). Legislators are getting increasingly involved, too. In April, a report conducted for Congress by the Institute of Medicine recommended stricter standards for cafeteria, vending machine, and fundraising food items.

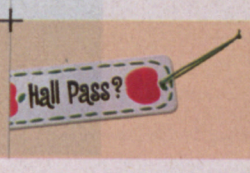
That last part is crucial, says Johanson, who encourages schools to move away from fundraisers like bake sales or those that involve candy bars or fast food certificates. Other options that are equally (and sometimes more!) profitable are walk-a-thons, which encourage physical activity; book fairs; collecting recyclable materials; and selling gift cards to local stores. For an extensive list of healthy fundraisers and their benefits, consult CSPI's report "Sweet Deals" at www.cspinet.org/reports/index.html.

—MAREN MACINTYRE

Tell-tale signs of cheating **14**

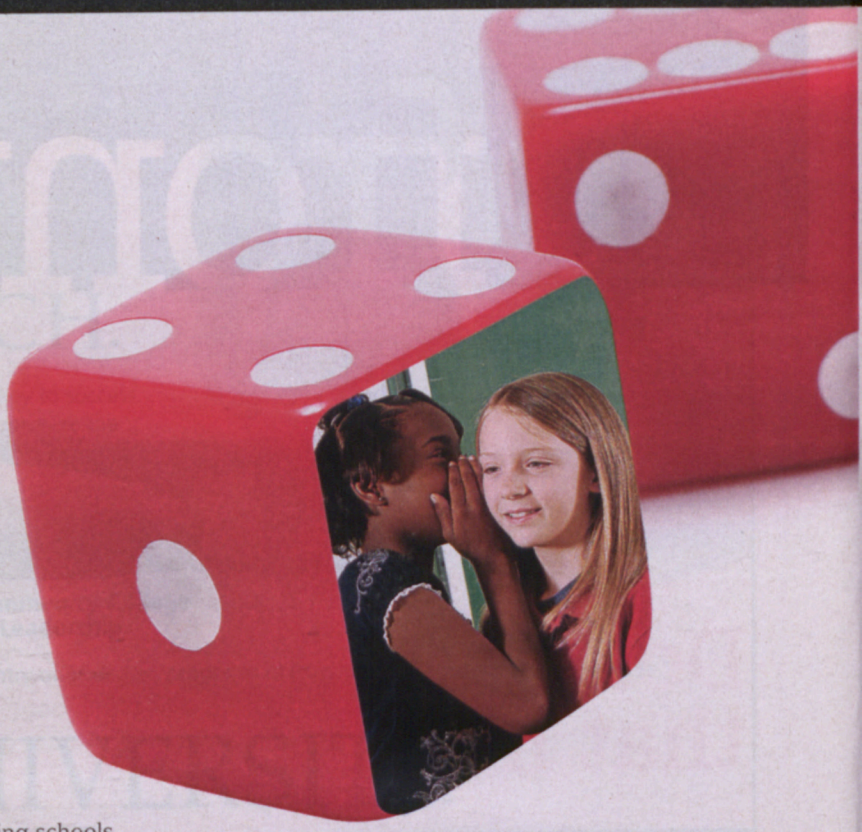
Test-taking tool **17**

Do they really have to go? **18**



HOT DOG BUN: CIARAN GRIFFIN; CARROT: DAVIES & STARR; GREEN BEANS: ELENA ELISSEEVA; FRENCH FRY BOX: GABRIELA TROJANOWSKA; PHOTO COLLAGE: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

High-stakes cheating



A *DALLAS MORNING NEWS* investigation has concluded that tens of thousands of students cheat on the high-stakes assessment test that Texas students take each year. Guided by a test-cheating expert, the reporters compared patterns of wrong answers on individual student answer sheets. If two or more shared a pattern that would not occur randomly more than once in 10,000 cases, they concluded that the students collaborated.

In some schools, 90 percent of the answer sheets showed the tell-tale signs of cheating. The top-cheating schools were charters—they were four times as bad as regular public schools. But many public schools were also caught. (Two-thirds of all schools showed no evidence of cheating.)

After an earlier exposé, the state hired a test-security company, which found 700 schools where cheating seemed to have happened. According to the company, on the 2005 11th-grade math test, 6.1 percent of the answer sheets were compromised.

But, the newspaper reported, the state's follow-up amounted to asking school officials whether there might be cheating at their schools. Surprise! Everyone said no. Following the new report, state officials said they'd take another look.

Blast from the Past

THE CLICKING PROJECTOR, grainy images, off-base predictions—remember those great old filmstrips? Chris Moore, a former Texas science teacher, turned his love for these and other vintage educational tools into a profitable business. Droppin' Science's posters, T-shirts, still images, and filmstrips range from antique botanical images to unintentionally comical movies about social skills, drugs, and science from the 1960s. Moore founded the company after he and his wife relocated and he needed a new job. He opted to restore the vintage teaching materials he had been collecting as a hobby and turned them into affordable art for sale. To learn more, go to www.droppinscience.net.

—DANIELLE TAYLOR

DICE PHOTO: HOMESTUDIO; WHISPERING GIRLS: JOCELYN AUGUSTINO; FILM PROJECTOR: MEDIOIMAGES/PHOTODISC; MAN AND THE MOON FILM CLIP: COURTESY OF DROPPIN' SCIENCE

Getting Kids Ready To Compete

Students often complain that the subjects they study in school don't give them the skills they need in the real world. Many schools and teachers aren't equipped to educate students in the digital age.

A group of educators is setting out to change that. Partnership For The 21st Century brings educators and businesses together to discuss how to best prepare American students to compete in the global economy. Their message? Schools need the freedom to weave real-world lessons into the core subjects on which they are now so intensely focused.

Major corporations, including Dell, Cisco Systems, and Apple Inc., are joining with NEA and the American Federation of Teachers in the effort.

That will give students greater access to health and financial literacy, global awareness education, and prepare them to participate more fully in civic life—a must for their globalized futures. For more, go to www.21stcenturyskills.org.

—DANIELLE TAYLOR

billion

Annual **COST** of teacher **TURNOVER** in U.S. schools.

SOURCE: NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TEACHING AND AMERICA'S FUTURE

SUPPORT FOR GAY EDUCATORS ON THE RISE

FINDINGS IN a recent Pew Survey show that support for gay educators is on the rise. Only 28 percent of people think a school board should fire educators based on their sexual orientation. The survey marks the first time this percentage has dropped below 30—a strong decrease from 51 percent in 1987.

"I believe that the national conversation that is happening regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender self-expression has made a huge difference," says Mary Paradise, co-chair of the NEA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Caucus. "When more and more people stand up to support their sons and daughters, their neighbors and friends, their home decorators and hairdressers, their teachers and health care providers, it makes a difference." —MAREN MACINTYRE

SOCKET PHOTO: STEVE CUKROV, PENCIL ILLUSTRATION: ANDREA DANTI

+ notepad

¡SI VOTAMOS!

Advice for '08 candidates seeking Hispanic votes: ignore education at your peril. It was the most important issue to more than 1,000 registered Hispanic voters—beating out the war in Iraq, health care, and immigration in a recent survey commissioned by the National Council of La Raza.

Ninety percent of Hispanic voters said improving public education must be a "very important" priority for the President. Roughly half said that public schools were "poor" or "mediocre." They don't blame the teachers, though. More than 60 percent said teachers do a good job.

NUMBERS OF BLACK STUDENTS DIP IN NEW ORLEANS

About 89 percent of the students returning to schools in New Orleans last month were Black, down from 93 percent before Hurricane Katrina, according to a report analyzing how the city is recovering. Of the 128 public schools in Orleans Parish, 58 were reopened by the end of the last school year, and another 25 were expected to open this fall.

Have a great idea?

Send it by mail: *NEA Today*
1201 16th St., N.W.,
Washington, DC 20036

Send it by e-mail:
neatoday@nea.org

WATCH THIS

Shopping With Too Little Money

A TRIP TO THE GROCERY STORE can be a simple exercise (provided you're not lugging a screaming toddler through the sugar cereal aisle.) But for too many education support professionals (ESPs) and teachers, grocery shopping is yet another reminder of how working for less than a living wage means making tough, unfair choices. As part of its statewide living wage campaign, the Washington Education Association (WEA) posted a short video clip on its Web site in which ESP peer educator Carrie Strom, who takes home about $1,000 a month, visits the grocery store.

In one powerful moment, Carrie explains that she simply runs out of money for food halfway through the month. "There are so many Carries in the world," says Debby Chandler, an action team coordinator for WEA. See the video at www.washingtonea.org/static_content/video/07/livwage/LivingWage.wmv.

Outreach to Teach

A honeymoon cruise to the Grand Cayman Islands or resurfacing asphalt at an elementary school? For newlywed Erica Jarmon, a first-grade teacher at Gotwals Elementary School in Norristown, Pennsylvania, it was actually an easy decision. "I got married two days ago," Jarmon said, "but when I heard Outreach to Teach was coming to our school, I had to stay."

THIS YEAR, more than 300 NEA members—including Student, Retired, Higher Education, and Education Support Professional members—participated in the summer event that has become one of the most popular adjuncts of NEA's annual Representative Assembly. Volunteers grabbed mops, paintbrushes, hammers, and shovels to clean the school, paint murals, decorate bulletin boards, and put up retaining walls. Yvette Rios, set designer for the hit daytime show *Rachael Ray*, turned a lackluster teacher's lounge into a stunning retreat. The most critical renovation was the landscaping transformation of 20,000 square feet of hard asphalt into a soft, verdant lawn. "Now the children have a safe place to play and learn," said a grateful Principal Maryanne Hoskins, who plans to add outdoor weather and music stations. NEA Student Chairperson Anthony Daniels commended his fellow Student Program members. "They're creating an environment where students can learn—in and outside of the classroom," he said.

$50

Amount a seventh-grade student in a New York City pilot program will **EARN** for a perfect score on each of 10 standardized tests throughout the year. They get $10 just for **TAKING THE TEST.** Fourth-graders get half as much.

Source: *The New York Times*

FILM CLIP: COURTESY OF WEA; OUTREACH PHOTO: BRAD BOWER

STUDENT IMPROVE-MINT

EDUCATORS TODAY have a new tool to hand out before tests along with No. 2 pencils and words of encouragement. Across the nation, they're giving their students peppermints, which reportedly increase performance and raise grades.

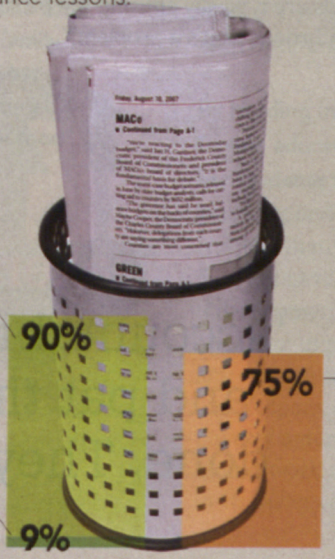
Researchers at the University of Cincinnati previously examined the correlation between peppermint and mental acuity and found that a sniff or two of mint leads to improved focus and increased alertness in some skill areas.

Principal Charlotte Boucher of Eastern Middle School in Silver Spring, Maryland, ordered 3,600 peppermint candies to give to students before state assessment exams last March. She said she had originally heard about peppermints improving grades as professional gossip, but decided to give them to students just to give them something to snack on and relax with during the exam. "We wanted the students to know we were supporting them," said Boucher. "If the mints would give them a break, that could only be good. And if they boost the test scores, well, we're OK with that too."

—DANIELLE TAYLOR

Civics Suffering

NEED MORE evidence that the onslaught of mandatory testing under No Child Left Behind is negatively affecting students' opportunities to become well-rounded thinkers? A Carnegie-Knight Task Force survey of 1,250 5th-12th grade civics, government, and social studies teachers found that teaching to the test is leaving educators too little time for civics education. Among the resources being left behind: use of current events to enhance lessons.



Teachers who fully or partly agree that news in the classroom is one of the best ways to **GET STUDENTS INTERESTED** in a class and its subject.

Those who agreed fully that news in the classroom is one of the best ways to **PREPARE** students for mandated standardized tests.

Teachers who say they are **USING NEWS LESS** often in the classroom, citing mandated standardized tests as the reason.

> global takes

IMPORTANT BAROMETER READING

Some 115 million children worldwide have no access to an education, according to the *Barometer of Human and Trade Union Rights*, an extensive report released by Education International (EI) at this summer's World Congress in Berlin.

The Barometer provides statistics and analyzes academic freedom, gender equality, students with special needs, refugee and minority children, and child labor in each country.

Some startling statistics:

*** In 2005, the average primary school classroom in Afghanistan had 83 pupils.**

*** In 2004, only 23 percent of the children completing a primary education in Chad were girls.**

Not all the news is bleak. In 2000, Thailand spent some 31 percent of its public expenditure budget on education, the most of any nation that year.

NEA, a founding member of EI, continues to advance programs and collaborations with EI to improve conditions for educators and children worldwide.

Read the report at www.nea.org/ref?barometer.

MINTS PHOTO: MARGARET M. STEWART; TRASH CAN PHOTO: STOCKBYTE

Should they stay or should they go?

An ongoing struggle in classrooms has some teachers and support professionals confused about when to let students take bathroom breaks. The reason? Students using these breaks to skip class, cause trouble in the halls, or even cheat on tests.

BUT IF a student is denied the trip to the toilet, health issues (like damaged kidneys) may arise.

While it's recommended that all people use the bathroom every two to three hours to avoid health problems, it's unreasonable to expect teachers to track each student's restroom use. The general rule of thumb is, depending on how well they know their students' behavior, teachers can decide if a bathroom break request is genuine.

"Not all children have a mature bladder function and some have to go more often than others," says Chris Cooper, M.D., director of pediatric urology at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. "Not letting them go leads to a vicious cycle, which may cause them to go more than they need to. I'd advise teachers to take it on an individual basis, realizing that some children will have to go more often than others."

When it comes to other kids, especially older ones, "you've got to maintain some semblance of order," Cooper says, "and if some kids are typically abusing the privilege to get out and go to the bathroom, that's a problem."

—MAREN MACINTYRE

VITAL STATS

They Say/You Say

When it comes to assessing how prepared children are for school, parents and teachers don't always agree.

	PARENTS	TEACHERS
Children in the United States are extremely or very prepared when they enter kindergarten (they know basic counting, can spell their name, and listen in class).	25%	7%
Children were extremely or very well prepared to interact, play, and share well with others.	78%	13%
It is important for children to read and write the alphabet before starting school.	55%	32%
If children are not prepared for school when they enter kindergarten, it will be very easy or somewhat easy for them to catch up.	24%	15%
A child who enters kindergarten ready to learn is less likely to try drugs.	75%	52%
A child prepared upon entering kindergarten would be more likely to attend college.	78%	94%

Source: Harris Interactive for PNC Financial Services Group

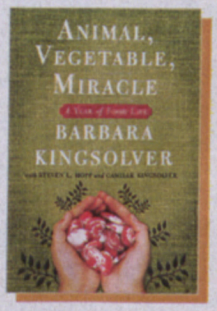
"Lawmakers throw together 'accountability,' 'standards,' and pat themselves on the done. They never see what NCLB classroom looks like."

—WILLIAM BRIDEAU, GUEST ESSAYIST FOR THE ROCHESTER

HALL PASS: PICTUREQUEST

Book Focus

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE: A YEAR OF FOOD LIFE



Barbara Kingsolver's sharp humor and fluid prose are in fine form in this chronicle of one year spent by her clan—hubby, two daughters, and herself—growing, canning, and preparing their own food and buying exclusively from producers within a 100-mile radius of their small Appalachian farm. Kingsolver emerges as a champion of the American farmer and unlikely spokesperson for the importance of (homegrown) meat in the American diet.

Part memoir, part cookbook, part compendium of ominous facts (Americans' flabby lifestyles and poor nutritional choices put us in the odd position of leaving our children a shorter life expectancy than our own), *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* joins a growing body of criticism of industrial agriculture and its fuel-reliant delivery system, illuminating the connections between anonymous food production and a host of disastrous food policies and dangerous eating habits.

At its heart, the book is an impassioned plea for a return to a genuine food culture, and a record of how one family made deliberate choices to heal what Kingsolver calls "the American eating disorder" by participating in the local food economy.

buzzwords like
'raising the bar,'
back for a job well
the inside of an

EMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE, JUNE 5, 2007

Q&A

Leslie Bennetts

AUTHOR, *THE FEMININE MISTAKE*

Bennetts, the first woman ever to cover a presidential campaign for *The New York Times*, touched off a firestorm this year with the release of a book in which she argues that working women are more personally satisfied and less vulnerable financially than women who stay at home to raise children.

What motivated you to write the book?

My alarm about the incomplete and misleading media coverage of women who opt out of work to raise children. It almost never discussed the long-term economic risks for those who give up their careers, or the difficulties of opting back in after a time out of the work force. Benefits of work were also neglected, too. Public debate about this issue always seemed to assume that if a woman did not have to work out of financial necessity, there was no other reason for her to do so.

You were assailed by stay-at-home mothers online when the book came out. Why are Internet forums and blogs such a ripe new front in the so-called Mommy Wars?

The relative anonymity of the Internet has made it easier for angry or unbalanced people to vent their rage without taking responsibility for what they say. I suspect that the vitriolic nature of the "Mommy Wars" also reflects the resentment and frustration felt by many stay-at-home mothers who are secretly unhappy with the choice they've made, but who feel too defensive to admit it. Instead they just lash out at working mothers. It seems to me that there are more constructive ways to deal with differences of opinion.

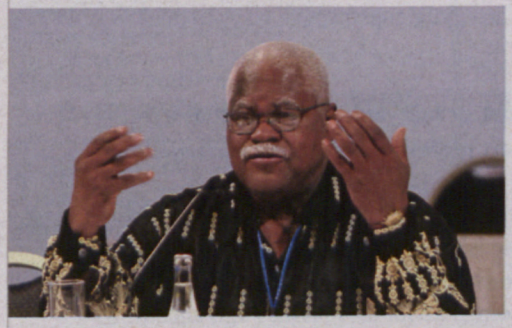
By heading into the classroom, school, or bus yard every day, does a female educator or education support professional send the message to her students that career and family can be balanced?

Working mothers in any field provide positive role models for younger women, many of whom are apprehensive about balancing work and family and fearful that they will have to choose one. It's very important for older women to talk with young women about these issues and encourage them to pursue their own goals. It's not a safe or sensible choice for any woman to give up her economic self-sufficiency, given the lengthening lifespans of American women, the divorce rate, and the prevalence of poverty among older women. Millions of women have succeeded in combining work and family, and professional women can play a crucial role in showing younger women how to build well-rounded lives.

leading the way

FIGHTING FOR THE WORLD'S STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS

A great public school for every child is far out of reach when you look at the schoolhouse from an international perspective. Some 155 million children worldwide have no access to an education, according to the *Barometer of Human and Trade Union Rights*, an extensive research report released by Education International (EI).



NEA President **Reg Weaver**

The *Barometer* provides country-by-country statistics on early childhood education, enrollment rates, and degree of privatization, along with analyses of academic freedom, gender equality, the status of refugee and minority children, and child labor.

"Just as we believe that every student should have access to a great public school, so do our colleagues around the world," says NEA President Reg Weaver, who began a second term as EI vice president at the organization's World Congress in Berlin this past July.

"But more than that," Weaver notes, "we all believe that this access is a basic right."

Advancing the rights of both students and educators is the monumental task faced by EI, which is made up of 390 organizations representing more than 30 million educators in 170 countries.

EI has taken on many cases of injustice worldwide, including one in Colombia, where teacher activists Raquel Castro and Samuel Morales were jailed in 2004 after witnessing the assassination of three union colleagues. Morales was released earlier this summer; Castro remained jailed in the political wing of the Bogotá Women's Prison until August. Neither was allowed to leave the country to attend the World Congress as recipients of the Mary Hatwood Futrell Human and Trade Union Rights Award.

Peru, Ethiopia, Mexico, Albania—EI is engaged in campaigns there, as well. In some cases, educators have been arrested, tortured, or even murdered.

In his opening address to the World Congress, EI President Thulas Nxesi, of the South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union, issued a call for unity and activism. "We are all educators, we are all workers—regardless of any difference in color or creed—and we face common challenges. Where teacher unions do not exist, EI must offer assistance in establishing them. Where unions are weak, we must work cooperatively to strengthen them. Where unions are under attack from governments or vested interests, we must be willing to provide concrete solidarity and support."

NEA is a founding member of EI and presented the largest delegation, totaling 50, at the World Congress. In addition to being involved in EI initiatives, NEA has development cooperation projects focused on human rights, women's leadership, and capacity building for education unions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

NEA's work with EI ensures that "a good education is not just a question of luck," as German President Horst Köhler noted in his speech to the World Congress. "It's a human right."

For more, go to **www.nea.org/ref?EI**.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

New Accounting Standards Threaten Bargaining

New accounting standards for retiree health benefits developed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) threaten to change bargaining dynamics and employee-employer relationships. Under the new standards, government agencies and school districts will be asked to report the value of retiree health care benefits promised to active and retired workers. "When the reports are issued, expect sticker shock and knee-jerk attempts to slash benefits or change current workers' and retirees' economic packages," cautions a report from NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy (NEA CB/MA). For example, some districts might suggest the new standards will force them to divert money from education budgets to pre-fund benefits.

Locals in Alabama, California, Delaware, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Utah are already grappling with the new standards, which are being phased in. Courtney White, director of research bargaining and legislative services with the **Utah Education Association**, says Associations can help school officials understand that the standards don't require pre-funding. "You don't have to come up with all the money up front," says White. While GASB—a nonprofit that sets accounting standards for state and local governments, school districts, and other public entities—does not have legal authority, some states mandate compliance, and the accounting profession views the standards as the baseline for proper accounting. NEA CB/MA has produced materials to help Association leaders manage the changes. Visit www.nea.org/ref?GASB for details.

HEALTH CARE

Nevada Plan Prompts Decisions

In Nevada, teachers with the Clark County School District who now pay for health insurance through the **Clark County Education Association (CCEA)** may choose to retire early, within the next 13 months, to qualify for a state plan, which could exacerbate the state's educator shortage. Active duty teachers also face a choice, as they must sign with the state plan by November 2008 or forever forfeit their eligibility for the subsidized plan.

For instance, retired teachers who now pay $435 a month for individual HMO coverage through CCEA's plan would pay about $50 a month for PPO coverage under the state's program, albeit with large deductibles for service. The state requires non-state public employers, including school districts, to subsidize the cost of retirees who sign up with the state's plan—but no other comparable plan, like CCEA's. The Clark County district would pay about $500 a month toward each retiree's premium.

"Those who are not near retirement are pleased with our [union] plan and don't appreciate being pressured to sign with the state," says CCEA President Mary Ella Holloway. "If the state and the district have to kick in more money for retirement benefits, that could cut back on future pay raises for teachers."

PRIVATIZATION

Custodial Jobs Saved in North Carolina

Members of the **Sampson County Association of Educators (SCAE)** helped defeat a school board proposal to privatize custodial services in their district through grassroots organizing, lobbying, and team work, says Eddie Davis, president of the **North Carolina Association of Educators**. "Teachers stood up for ESPs, and ESPs stood up for teachers," says Davis of the 250-member SCAE, a wall-to-wall unit. Teachers, state, and local Association staff, and more than 30 custodians, filled a late summer school board meeting where board members were to vote on privatizing the district's 40 school custodial jobs. After hearing testimonials from custodians, a motion to reject the privatization of services unanimously passed.

Report Card

We check out who's making the grade—or needs improvement—in education around the country.

A Barbara Morgan

The teacher-astronaut transformed the international space station into a classroom this summer, fulfilling the legacy of teacher Christa McAuliffe, who died in the 1986 *Challenger* flight explosion.

F Howell Public Schools in Michigan

Their decision to privatize services this summer left 40 custodians out of work.

A Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick

He signed into law a bill allowing teachers and other municipal employees access to health insurance through the state's health care insurance agency, a move endorsed by the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

MORGAN: NASA; PATRICK: MASS. GOV. WEB SITE

TIME OUT

Louisiana ESPs challenge a new timekeeping system, raising questions about religious beliefs and privacy. BY JOHN ROSALES

When Louisiana's St. John the Baptist Parish School Board installed a new biometric time clock for employees, the device clashed with the religious beliefs of bus driver Sandra McCray and electrician Rev. Herman Clayton Jr.

The $85,000 scanning system assigns points on thumbprints, which identify workers when they sign in. Clayton and McCray believe that the imprint or scan of any body part amounts to assigning numbers to the body, which they say is warned against in Revelation 13:16-17.

"My finger would be reduced to numbers," says Clayton, a minister with Providence No. 2 Baptist Church in Montz, Louisiana, and a graduate of Christian Bible College. Clayton believes that using the biometric system would render him vulnerable to evil, in accordance with "end time" doctrine.

Clayton and McCray were suspended without pay for refusing to use the scanner. After their suspension, they filed grievances against the district's school board, requesting a reasonable accommodation that would allow them to record their time by an alternative method.

Herman Clayton Jr. and **Sandra McCray** feel they were discriminated against on the basis of their religion. Right: The biometric time clock.

> "A thumbprint is a uniquely distinct feature. We have no idea how the system is maintained or where the information is stored." —Julie Richard-Spencer

Biometric scanners have sparked similar debates in the private sector. A former van driver for Hertz Corporation and two former nursing home employees filed similar lawsuits under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for an employee's religion unless doing so would create an "undue hardship."

But at a parish board meeting last April, what was expected to be a debate on religious rights and reasonable accommodation ended up as a dispute over whether the board violated its contract with the St. John Association of Educators (SJAE).

"The board violated terms of its bargaining contract by unilaterally changing the employees' attendance policy," says Julie Richard-Spencer, the attorney representing Clayton and McCray on behalf of SJAE.

According to the union agreement, any changes in the terms of employment must be negotiated between the board and union. "Implementation of the biometric system was not bargained with the union," she says. "The superintendent admitted that he did not bargain the issue." In news accounts, Superintendent Michael Coburn said he did not have to consult with the union about installing the system, which affects more than 700 district workers.

The district's timekeeping system also presents "huge privacy issues," according to Richard-Spencer. "A thumbprint is a uniquely distinct feature," she says. "We have no idea how the system is maintained or where the information is stored."

The district's previous sign-in system required plastic cards to be swiped. It was discarded to help ensure that employees were not being signed in or out by someone else.

Clayton and McCray were permitted to manually sign in on paper as the new scanning system was being installed in October 2006. However, last February, even before the system was fully installed, they were asked again to use the scanning device and were suspended when they refused.

"I showed up for work one day and my supervisor said if I did not finger scan, I could not work," says Clayton, who is chair of SJAE's grievance committee. Clayton has been doing part-time contract jobs to help pay bills. "No one will hire me on a permanent basis because of the pending action with the school board."

At press time, the board and union had decided to let an arbitrator determine whether the employees must use the school system's biometric time clock. For updates, visit **www.nea.org/ref?scanner**.

PHOTOS: SEAN GARDNER

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STUDENT SPEECH TAKES A HIT

High Court backs "Bong Hits" ban.

In the end, Joseph Frederick got a lot more than the 15 minutes of fame he was after. His efforts to appear on TV ultimately altered the course of constitutional law and diminished, however slightly, the free speech rights of all students.

It all began on January 24, 2002, the day the Olympic torch passed in front of Alaska's Juneau-Douglas High School (JDHS) on its way to the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. JDHS principal Deborah Morse released students from class for a brief period to view the one-time event under faculty supervision.

Frederick, an 18-year-old senior who cut class that morning, stationed himself on a public sidewalk directly across from the school, and—just as the torch passed by and with TV cameras rolling—he and several friends unfurled a 14-foot banner proclaiming, "Bong Hits 4 Jesus."

Livid, Morse dashed across the street and demanded that he take down the sign. When he refused, she grabbed it out of his hand. She later suspended him for 10 days. The charge? Promoting the use of illegal drugs at a school-sponsored event. ("Bong hit" is slang for smoking marijuana.)

In the ensuing lawsuit, Frederick vehemently denied that he was encouraging drug use. The slogan, he claimed, was just "meaningless and funny nonsense meant to attract television cameras." He succeeded, but he also attracted the attention of the Supreme Court.

In a 5-4 ruling last June, the Court held that Principal Morse did not violate Fredrick's First Amendment rights when she seized his banner and punished him. The Court said that, regardless of Frederick's intent, Morse reasonably interpreted his "ambiguous" and "silly" banner as "promoting illegal drug use," and that school officials have the authority to ban such student speech at a "school event."

"School principals have a difficult job," the Court mused. By seizing the banner, Morse sent "a powerful message to the students in her charge about how serious the school was about the dangers of illegal drug use."

But the Court rejected Morse's broad argument that administrators can censor student speech whenever it is "inconsistent" with the school's "educational mission."

The case is noteworthy for the odd array of organizations that filed amicus briefs supporting Frederick. In recent years, conservative religious organizations have filed a number of lawsuits defending the rights of Christian students to engage in religious and anti-gay speech in school. Fearing that an adverse decision might empower officials to ban such speech, five of these organizations joined various civil liberties and gay rights groups in urging the Court to uphold Frederick's right to display his banner about Jesus and pot.

In a concurring opinion, Justices Alito and Kennedy sought to put those fears to rest. Emphasizing that the Court's decision is a very narrow one limited to pro-drug speech, the two Justices cautioned that it should not be read as granting administrators broad new power to censor students. The Court's ruling, they wrote, "provides no support for any restriction of speech that can plausibly be interpreted as commenting on any political or social issue."

—MICHAEL D. SIMPSON
NEA Office of General Counsel

TEACHER SPEECH CASE PENDING

THE SUPREME COURT has been asked to overturn a controversial court decision that teachers have no free speech rights in the classroom.

Indiana teacher Deb Mayer claimed she lost her job in retaliation for expressing her opposition to the Iraq War during a class discussion of current events. But the Seventh Circuit ruled last January that the First Amendment "does not entitle primary and secondary teachers, when conducting the education of captive audiences, to advocate viewpoints that depart from the curriculum." Students "ought not be subject to teachers' idiosyncratic perspectives," the court said.

"The school system does not regulate teachers' speech as much as it hires that speech," the court continued. "Expression is a teacher's stock in trade, the commodity she sells to her employer in exchange for a salary."

This is the latest in a string of federal court rulings refusing to recognize teacher speech rights in class. The Supreme Court will announce in October whether it will hear the appeal.

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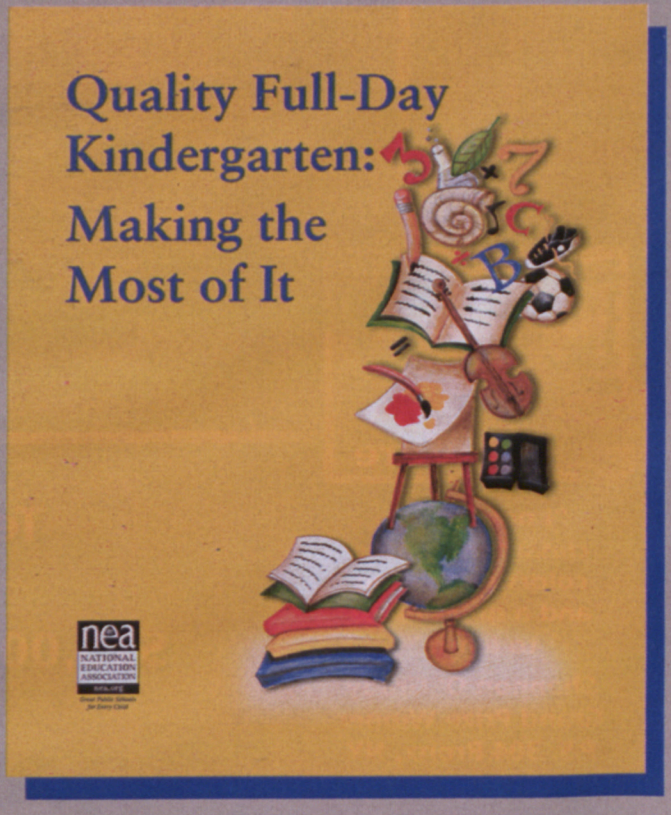

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'Multiple Measures' Momentum

SUPPORT GROWS FOR SCRAPPING NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND'S RELIANCE ON ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL TESTS. BY TIM WALKER AND ALAIN JEHLEN

As the showdown over the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), looms on Capitol Hill, influential lawmakers are sending encouraging signs that they are prepared to scuttle one of the most disfavored elements of the law—the sole reliance on testing as a means for evaluating student achievement and school performance. Most prominently, Rep. George Miller of California, chair of the House Education and Labor Committee and one of the chief architects of the 2002 law, now favors using a wider menu of factors that might include district-level assessments, end-of-course tests, graduation and attendance rates, and others to more precisely measure student learning and school performance. In late August, Rep. Miller released a draft bill that included a provision allowing multiple measures of student achievement.

Left to right: Rep. **George Miller** (D-CA) and Sen. **Edward Kennedy** (D-MA) discuss NCLB reauthorization with NEA President **Reg Weaver** and NEA Vice President **Dennis Van Roekel**.

Multiple measures—one of NEA's top legislative priorities for NCLB—was also endorsed in a recent report by the Forum on Educational Accountability. The report urged lawmakers to replace one-shot tests with a slate of accountability measures that would create a "rich range of evidence" to help schools improve. The move also has the support of many civil rights organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and the Learning Disabilities Association of America.

Burgeoning support for multiple measures comes in the midst of conflicting test score trends. Scores on some high-stakes state tests are rising. But scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—a broader achievement test—seem unaffected by NCLB.

In June, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) reported an increase in state test scores since 2002. But testing expert Robert Linn, one of six advisors for the CEP study, believes these gains may at least partly be due to the introduction of new tests. Linn, emeritus professor at the University of Colorado and former president of the American Educational Research Association, has done research showing that scores go up in the first few years of a new test, probably because teachers are adapting their teaching to that test.

"It is hard to know how much of the increase is due to this effect," Linn says. "I personally would put more weight on state NAEP results [which have not gone up] than was done in the report."

Harvard University testing expert Dan Koretz uses the analogy of a political poll to illustrate what happens when teachers teach to the test. A poll of 1,000 people can predict a national election very accurately, but only if those who are polled get no special attention from the campaigns. If a candidate knew which 1,000 voters were going to be called and worked extra hard to convince just those voters, the poll would show that candidate winning by a landslide—and it would be completely wrong.

Similarly, a standardized test, says Koretz, can't cover every aspect of the subject. It's a sample, and if teachers tailor their instruction to the specific types of questions used on the test, students can show great improvement without actually knowing any more. "Unless there's other data corroborating the results, you can't trust data from high-stakes tests," Koretz concludes.

Meanwhile, new research published in the American Educational Research Association's *Educational Researcher* reports that progress in raising test scores, particularly on the NAEP, was stronger before NCLB was approved in 2002, than in the four years following enactment of the law.

Members of Congress need to hear from working educators who believe one test can't fully measure student achievement, and who see the impact of NCLB in their classrooms. Visit NEA's Legislative Action Center at www.nea.org/lac and urge your elected representatives to support multiple measures and other legislative proposals that will improve NCLB. nea

nea.org

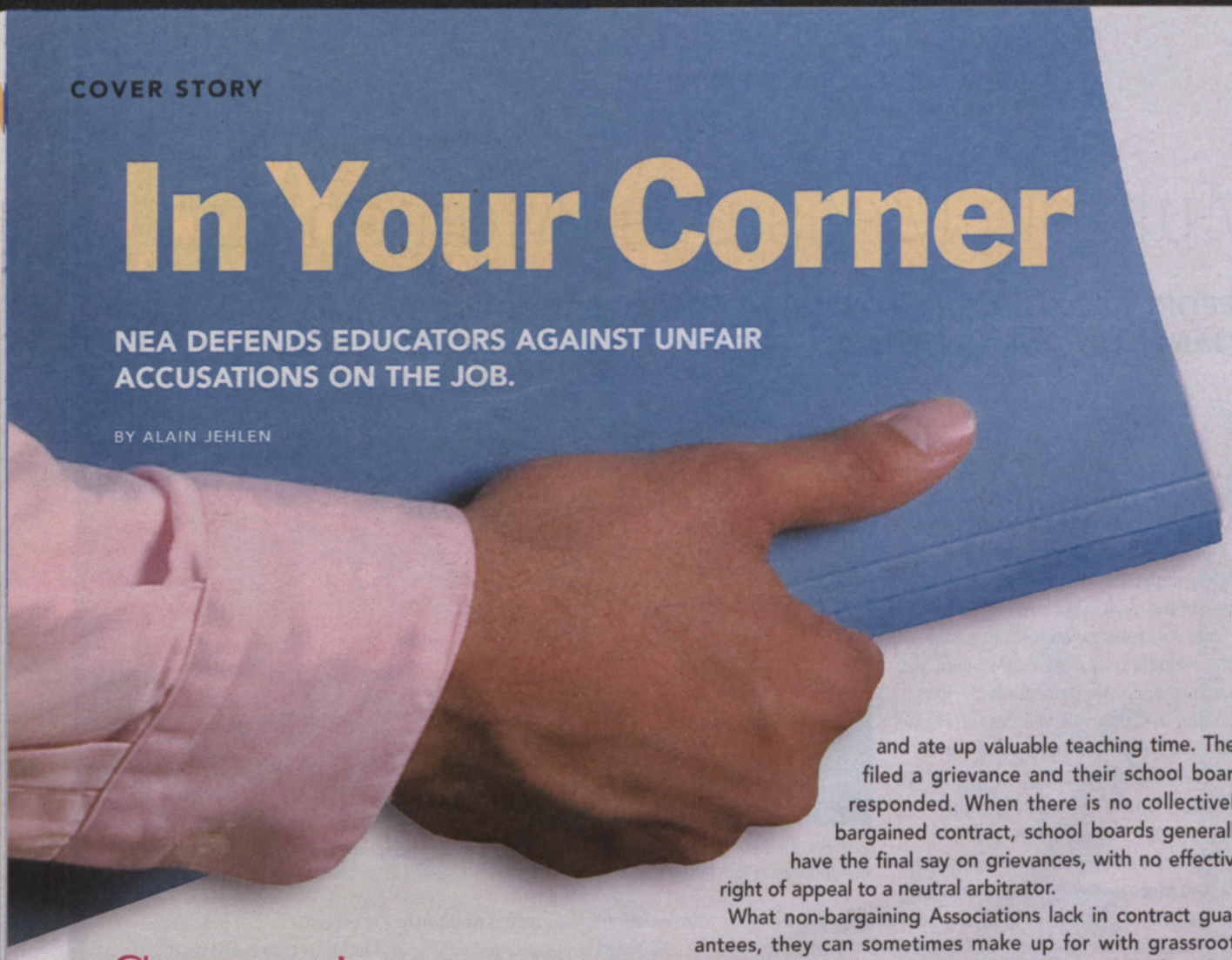
FOR LINKS TO THE FORUM ON EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT AND THE *EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER* FINDINGS, GO TO WWW.NEA.ORG/ESEA/RESEARCH_ESEA.HTML

PHOTO: SANDY SCHAEFFER

In Your Corner

NEA DEFENDS EDUCATORS AGAINST UNFAIR ACCUSATIONS ON THE JOB.

BY ALAIN JEHLEN



Sometimes, life's not fair.

RON GREEN, a beloved teacher, inspired generations of students.

DENISE GOUGH'S principal said she was the best school nurse he'd ever worked with.

JANE JACKSON simply told the truth.

Then suddenly, Green and Gough were out of a job, and Jackson was slapped with a harsh formal reprimand.

But all three, and thousands more like them, were vindicated with the help of the Association by using the grievance provision of their collective bargaining contract. It's a provision that promises a fair process for those accused of wrongdoing.

Most educators don't think they'll ever need to file a grievance, and most never do. But when it's needed, the right to due process can be a career-saver.

In some states, especially in the South, there's no collective bargaining, but there usually is a grievance or due process system written into the state law. "When you can't bargain with the school board, you wind up bargaining with the legislature," says Carol Davis, former president of the Louisiana Association of Educators. It was a grievance process mandated by law that provided an opening for 70 Baton Rouge special education teachers plagued by computer software that wouldn't work and ate up valuable teaching time. They filed a grievance and their school board responded. When there is no collectively bargained contract, school boards generally have the final say on grievances, with no effective right of appeal to a neutral arbitrator.

What non-bargaining Associations lack in contract guarantees, they can sometimes make up for with grassroots pressure. "If you can stock the board meeting full of teachers and ESPs silently glaring at the board, sometimes you can turn them," explains Colleen Borst, executive director of the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE).

With or without a contract, the formal grievance process is only part of the shield that Associations can forge to protect educators. Nasty behavior by a supervisor can be painful enough without necessarily rising to the level of a contract violation or illegal act. "There's nothing that says people have to behave well, and frequently they don't," observes Claudia Cole Williams, who manages NCAE field and legal services. An effective building rep, especially one backed by a strong building organization, can often solve problems that aren't covered by the contract.

The Association's UniServ program can also help resolve problems. About four-fifths of the complaints from members handled by Virginia UniServ staffer Kelly Paine were settled informally, and most of the rest are settled without going to arbitration. Often, it's just a matter of getting the right person into the room—the administrator who can make, or change, a decision, she says.

Even so, there are cases—often hard to anticipate—when it sure helps to have a legally enforceable right to a fair hearing. We've gathered stories from around the country that show the range of problems and injustices that NEA members have tackled—and rectified—through grievances. As Gough said, "I knew with an unbiased arbitrator, the truth would come out."

PHOTO: DANNY PECK

Unexplained Ambush

WHY FIRE A NURSE WHO'S 'THE BEST'?

DENISE GOUGH remembers every detail of the terrifying encounter in November 2004 that changed her life. "It was a warm, sunny day," she recalls. "I was sitting at my desk when the superintendent walked in with the principal and slammed the door. They were both standing over me. I felt like a little ant. The superintendent said, 'Pack up and leave right now.'"

She went home and drew her curtains. "I didn't know what I was accused of," she says. "I was afraid CNN would be outside my door."

Gough had been at New Hampshire's Hampton Academy Junior High School as a nurse for 16 years, serving with more than 10 principals and consistently winning their praises, until she was blindsided by a new principal.

It's unclear what led him to fire this accomplished professional, whom his predecessor had called "the best middle school nurse I've ever had the experience to work with." The trouble may have grown out of an incident the previous year in which a student charged that Gough pushed her while giving her detention (the girl had made the same accusation against two teachers). She later recanted, but her father stayed mad. After that, several other parents complained about Gough—something that had never happened before. The arbitrator later noted the possibility that the angry father influenced the others.

Gough asked the principal to arrange a meeting with the parents so she could hear them out, apologize for any missteps, and clear the air. But the principal refused. Instead, Gough found herself the target in a series of escalating confrontations with the principal and superintendent that climaxed in their abrupt order for her to leave the building.

She was suspended with pay for 10 days, while the superintendent supposedly investigated parent complaints; the arbitration hearing later brought out that there had been no investigation. When the 10 days were up, the faculty welcomed her back with flowers and cake.

But the principal remained hostile, and two months later she was suspended again, this time for supposedly disobeying a directive, although the arbitrator would later rule that Gough had clearly tried to comply with everything that was asked of her. This time, her suspension lasted a month. And at the end of the year, the superintendent said she couldn't come back in the fall.

The union filed a grievance, saying the suspensions and the termination were grossly unfair. But the district claimed they had

Denise Gough (front) challenged her unfair termination with support from local union leaders **Andrea Shepard** and **Ed Beattie**.

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS ACCUSED OF. I WAS AFRAID CNN WOULD BE OUTSIDE MY DOOR."

— Denise Gough

PHOTO: JODIE ANDRUSKEVICH

"I WAS FURIOUS—I WAS IN AGONY!" MARY ELLEN DECKER REMEMBERS. BUT HER PHARMACIST WAS JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS.

no obligation to show they were treating Gough fairly because nurses were not covered by the contract.

In fact, nurses had been part of the bargaining unit since it was first recognized in 1972, and they had even served on bargaining teams. The state Public Employee Labor Relations Board rejected the argument, but the district went all the way to the state Supreme Court, trying unsuccessfully to avoid the contract's fair treatment requirement.

Meanwhile, Gough hunted for a new position, but "at some point in each interview, someone would ask, 'Why are you leaving your job?' and I would say, 'We've had a difference of opinion.'" And then they didn't hire her.

Her luck finally changed in a town across the state line in Massachusetts. She went to work there in the fall of 2006—and started to heal. "I absolutely love it," she said last May. "They're professionals. They're grateful for my service, and they know how to treat people. I wake up happy every morning."

With 16 years invested in the New Hampshire retirement system and her good name to clear, however, Gough was not about to give up on Hampton. "People point fingers in the supermarket. They don't know why I was terminated. They have doubts," she said.

At the arbitration hearing in November, Gough says she "felt very positive. . . I knew that with an unbiased arbitrator, the truth would come out."

In early February, as Gough cared for several students in her new office, she got a call from her union lawyer, Steve Sacks. "The decision's in," he said. "We won."

"I was ecstatic," Gough recalls.

The arbitrator ordered her reinstated the following fall, or, if she chose to stay in her new job, he ordered full compensation for her lost income and retirement plan benefits.

At first, she thought she would return to her old job. But over the summer she changed her mind. "I know my colleagues would welcome me, and there's a new principal, but it's the same superintendent. I'd be walking down the same corridors, sitting in the same office. All the memories would be right back. I decided to stay where I can be happy. This is where my heart is now."

'Inappropriate touching'

IT NEVER HAPPENED, BUT THEY TRIED TO FIRE HIM ANYWAY

Two days after he got the horrifying news, **RON GREEN** (not his real name) took a phone call from the mother of two students. She had heard he was accused of "inappropriate touching" and wanted him to know she believed in him.

The next day, she called again, and the next—every day for a year. The parent stayed in touch throughout the entire ordeal, which lasted nearly two years. She and a group of other parents galvanized community support, bombarding school officials and the district attorney's office with calls and petitions for the man who had taught their children—and in some cases, had taught them, too—in the course of an unblemished career of 31 years. But

PHOTO: MARK MULVILLE

that didn't stop school administrators from trying to fire him.

The state Association lawyer who represented Green says when there are allegations of sexual misconduct, many districts take the politically safe way out. Rather than investigate and judge the evidence themselves and risk being accused of exposing students to a predator, they'd rather fire the teacher and let the union file a grievance. That way, they can blame the arbitrator if the teacher goes back to work.

Of course, some accused teachers are guilty. But in this case, the evidence against Green was spectacularly weak.

His accusers were two sixth-grade girls. Green had given one of them an "F" on a term paper. The other was her inseparable best friend. The events they described would have been highly visible. One girl said he cupped her breast frequently with his hand and sometimes touched her crotch. The other girl said she "screamed...'Get off of me,'" when he touched her. They named students and even a teacher they claimed had witnessed these incidents. All of the supposed witnesses denied having seen or heard anything, and a student heard one of the accusers say the whole thing was a lie. Eventually, this all came out, but not for a long time.

"I was in shock," says Green, remembering that evening in March 2004, when his union president called to tell him of the charges. He says he ran out of his house, "leaving the door wide open. I drove around aimlessly for a while, thinking, 'This only happens in movies.'"

The principal was waiting for him the next morning. "He looked at me, and I said, 'I know.'" They went to the office of the superintendent, who told Green he was suspended with pay. Then he added, "Don't say a word."

"I think he said that to protect me," says Green.

Green found a criminal defense lawyer and steeled himself for an arrest that seemed about to happen any day—but never did.

Every day of waiting was agony.

In May, with Green still suspended and still not charged with any wrongdoing, his parent allies held a community picnic in his honor. Hundreds showed up. There were burgers and desserts and a petition to the superintendent praising Green and asking that he be restored to his classroom.

Instead, a few days later, the school district switched Green from paid leave to unpaid leave, and then moved to fire him.

By fall, the district attorney still had taken no action. Green's lawyer told him every day with no arrest was a plus, but that didn't make the waiting easier. Green and his wife started seeing a psychiatrist to help them bear the strain.

Although Green had filed a grievance to win his job back, he hadn't pushed it to arbitration because his lawyer worried that something said in an arbitration hearing could later hurt him in criminal court, where juries are hard to predict.

Suddenly in October, the union lawyer representing Green called to say the superintendent was willing to make a deal: If Green retired, the district would give him a year's pay, and he would keep his retirement benefits.

By this point, Green was worn down. "I was upset and angry—I didn't want a deal. I was innocent. I accepted it, but there wasn't a day that I didn't have buyer's remorse," says Green.

But the drama wasn't over. Days later, the school board turned down the deal. The rationale? If he were a sexual predator, they didn't want to reward him.

Green had had enough. With the help of his union lawyer, he decided to fight for his job and his name, regardless of the risk.

Their first move was to hire a private investigator, who warned from the start that he would follow the evidence wherever it led. The investigator interviewed all of the alleged witnesses, which neither the district attorney nor the school district had bothered to do. The investigator also discovered the student who'd heard Green's main accuser say that the whole thing was a lie.

The evidence was presented in three sessions spread over several months. To Green, the low point came early, hearing the two girls describe events he knew had never happened. The high point was the testimony of the girl who'd overheard the confession that the story was a lie. Every time the school board's lawyer tried to undermine her account, the girl repeated, "I'm 100 percent clear about what I heard."

More months passed before final legal briefs were filed and the arbitrator delivered her decision: The evidence showed Green was telling the truth. After 691 bitter days, he was ordered reinstated.

Today, Ron Green gets up every morning and goes to work at the job he loves: teaching sixth-graders.

But it's not the same—far from it. Before, Green had an informal, dynamic, highly personal teaching style. He would sometimes muss his students' hair, give them nicknames, and build games into his lesson plans. "They knew I loved them and thought they were special," he explains.

Now he feels constricted, dry, vigilant.

"I'm not the same person, and I can't be the same teacher," he says. "I don't believe I can be the kind of influence I was before. That's sad."

Truth and Consequences

A DIRECT QUESTION, AN HONEST ANSWER, AN OMINOUS REPRIMAND

Minnesota special education teacher **JANE JACKSON** (not her real name) wasn't particularly nervous going into the meeting to discuss one of her high school student's Individual Education Program (IEP). It was likely to be a routine annual check-in. She wasn't concerned when a child advocate came in with the parent—there was often someone along to help.

But when the advocate asked her pointedly how much time she gave the student daily, Jackson knew she had a problem.

"I hesitated. I turned beet red. I knew that by answering honestly, I would make the district look bad. But I couldn't lie."

Her simple answer revealed that the child's plan was not being carried out.

A bigger surprise awaited her the next morning, when her angry principal told Jackson she was putting a letter of reprimand into her personnel file. The principal wrote that she had been insubordinate and incompetent at the meeting, and had tried to

force administrators to hire more staff.

Ominously, the letter said, "If this conduct continues, further action will [be] taken."

The child's IEP specified that a teacher provide 50 minutes a day of direct, one-on-one instruction in reading, and another 30 minutes in writing. But because of staff cuts, a paraprofessional was handling the writing instruction, and Jackson was providing only 20 minutes of direct reading instruction, plus 30 minutes in a small group with other children of widely varying skills. Since the student was easily distracted, says Jackson, "it was far from ideal." But she didn't volunteer that opinion in the meeting. She just answered the advocate's questions.

"I got written up for telling the truth," she says. "I think [the principal] wanted me to lie."

The superintendent had earlier told staff to convene before any IEP meeting and forge a united front before telling parents what services would be provided. "I tried to get across to him that IEP meetings are for discussion—we can't dictate to parents. But he kept saying, 'We can't provide Cadillac services.'"

Cadillac or Chevy, however, was not the issue at the arbitration hearing on Jackson's grievance. Truth or falsehood was. In a sharply worded decision, the arbitrator said that if the district pressured Jackson to give the parent false information, they'd be trying to circumvent federal law and she couldn't be punished for refusing.

The letter of reprimand, with its threat of "further action," is gone. But not the memory of what occurred. "[The principal] acts like nothing happened. We're civil. It's hard for me to respect her, though," says Jackson. "I do my job and try to stay away from her as much as possible."

And the student? The district hired another part-time teacher so now his IEP is fulfilled. "He's making progress," says Jackson.

'Fail First'

YOU SUFFER, THEY SAVE

MARY ELLEN DECKER had scanned the letter she'd received, written in opaque bureaucratese, about her health insurance, but it didn't seem to say much. So she was taken by surprise when her prescription for Celebrex—to help control intense pain after a steroid shot for arthritis in her thumb—was denied.

Instead, the pharmacist told her to try Tylenol.

"I was furious—I was in agony!" she remembers. But her pharmacist was just following orders.

Decker's district, Dunkirk City Schools, southwest of Buffalo, New York, had unilaterally switched her prescription drug coverage to a system euphemistically called "step therapy," but also commonly—and more realistically—known as "fail first." That is, before you get the expensive drug your doctor thinks you need, you first have to try and fail with other, cheaper drugs.

Decker, who unfortunately has a great deal of experience with arthritis-related pain and the efficacy of various pain medicines, knew that Tylenol wasn't going to ease her suffering.

What did help was Decker's skill at arguing over the phone. Two days and several phone calls later, insurance representatives relented and her pharmacist was able to fill her prescription. In the meantime, she'd taught her regular high school class load in constant, excruciating pain.

Local union president Joe Sweeney says more than a quarter of his members made the unpleasant discovery that their pharmacists couldn't fill their prescriptions. Doctors are allowed to appeal a rejection, but that takes time. One member couldn't get his heart medicine because his doctor was on vacation.

That was not the kind of drug coverage the union and the district had agreed to at the bargaining table. Their contract had a clause guaranteeing no benefit reduction without negotiations. So Decker, who happens to be her local's grievance chair, filed a grievance. The district argued that "step therapy" was just a change in procedures, not coverage, but they failed to convince the arbitrator. Educators in Dunkirk no longer have to suffer through drug failure before they can follow their doctors' advice.

Visit www.nea.org/ref?letter to read the letter Decker received: Would you have understood it meant you wouldn't get a doctor's prescription filled?

Old School Organizing

LOUISIANA TEACHERS BANDED TOGETHER AND GOT THEM TO LISTEN

By 9 p.m., when **CAROLE WHITE** began telling the school board her story, the crowd of 100 teachers watching the hearing since 5 p.m. had dwindled, but the 12 board members were paying close attention. After months of organizing and newspaper publicity, they knew the issue before them wasn't going away.

White, who now heads the East Baton Rouge Association of Educators, spoke of the time a special education teacher came to her almost in tears. During a rainy-day indoor recess, two of her young students had announced they were playing teacher. She expected them to go write on the blackboard, but instead they sat down at a computer and started pecking away at the keys.

"This is what teachers do," they explained.

"All these students see is the back of their teacher's head," White told the board. That's because she spent her time fighting with software the district had bought for writing Individual Education Programs while a paraprofessional taught her class.

The district's special education managers had bought software that turned out to be a beta version—not finished, not tested, and not working.

"It was always crashing and you would lose everything you had put in and have to start all over again," recalls Cheryl Gray. "And it required you to use the Internet, but many of the classrooms were not wired for Internet."

"People were crying in school because supervisors would threaten to fire them or write them up if they didn't get their IEPs done on time, but that was impossible," says Kay Baucum. "You'd

"[THE SOFTWARE] REQUIRED YOU TO USE THE INTERNET, BUT MANY OF THE CLASSROOMS WERE NOT WIRED FOR INTERNET."

— Cheryl Gray

Baton Rouge special educators, forced to use faulty software that took away from valuable teaching time, fought for change. From left, front row: **Cheryl Gray, Chanda Leatherman, Carole White**; middle row: **Kathy DuPuis, Fran Shurtz**; back row: **Laura Kent, Anita Haywood, Carla Scott Washington**.

say, 'Do you mean I'm supposed to sit here and not teach the children?' And they'd answer, 'Whatever you have to do.' But they also said nobody should be working on this during class time!"

White and other Association activists decided to file a group grievance. It wasn't easy getting people to join. "People would work and work and moan and complain, but they didn't want to put their names down because they were scared," says Baucum.

"Most of the teachers were women and they'd been taught it was unladylike to complain," adds White. But it offended their sensibilities even more to be robbed of time with their students because of faulty software, so in time, 70 teachers from a dozen schools signed on.

Finally, they got their hearing before the school board. Administrators claimed the problems were the teachers' fault—that they didn't know how to use computers. So the teachers brought in a computer expert who, over the course of an hour and a half, laid out his professional opinion: the fault was with the software, not the teachers.

After seven hours of testimony and tense cross-examination, the school board invited White and Baucum to serve on a committee to look for better software. That search never happened, but administrators stopped harassing teachers and got the software company to fix the program so it became, if not convenient, at least workable. Most of the administrators involved have since left.

But in the three years since the hearing, the program has been modified and teachers say it's backsliding. It's extremely cumbersome and it doesn't allow for real individualization. "Everybody's looks the same," says Baucum. "I don't know why they think it's an 'Individual' Education [Program]."

The teachers are starting to talk about going back for another round. "We'll first go to the [new administrators] in special ed, but if that doesn't work, we'll file another grievance," says White. "I think they will hear us. I think they've learned we are not whiners and complainers—we want to do a good job." nea

07 MORE ON NEA.ORG

Is someone treating you unfairly? Don't suffer alone. NEA helps its members protect their careers through collective bargaining and by providing access to professional, experienced staff advocates to advise and represent employees in employment-related matters. To find out more about these services—including NEA's national network of UniServ representatives, who often play the central role in handling grievances—talk with your NEA building representative or call your local office. They may be able to help, formally or informally.

For more reports about members who grieved unfair treatment go to www.nea.org/ref?InYourCorner. While there, you'll also find explanations of common terms used in the grievance process.

PHOTO: SEAN GARDNER

Pop Goes the Educator

Popular culture's depiction of teachers and ESPs has been as fickle as a federal mandate.

Right around the time that two teachers, who are in fact extraterrestrials, begin strangling a school nurse, movie-watchers realize that *The Faculty* isn't going to be the most glowing depiction of educators ever brought to the big screen. The 1998 film is just one point (a low one) in pop culture portrayals of educators.

It isn't just the horror flicks that might make you dive for the remote, either. Hollywood's overall take on the profession has been a mixed bag, to say the least. For every *Dead Poets Society* there's a *Back to School*—both came in the 1980s, a decade in which entertainment producers couldn't decide whether teachers and education support professionals (ESPs) were inspiring visionaries or incompetent rubes. The music business has been equally schizophrenic, turning out tunes in which teachers appear either as cool role models or as cruel taskmasters or unprofessional vixens.

1950s

Ah, the good 'ole days in pop culture, when teachers were strong and revered figures.

MOVIES

GLENN FORD as Richard Dadier, *Blackboard Jungle* (1955)
DEBORAH KERR Anna Leonowens, *The King and I* (1956)

MUSIC

"Teacher's Pet," **DORIS DAY** (1958)

TV

EVE ARDEN Connie Brooks, *Our Miss Brooks* (1952)

1960s

An urbane Sydney Poitier and intrepid Anne Bancroft were the educators we wanted to be.

MOVIES

ANNE BANCROFT Annie Sullivan, *The Miracle Worker* (1962)
JERRY LEWIS Professor Julius Kelp, *The Nutty Professor* (1963)
SYDNEY POITIER Mark Thackeray, *To Sir With Love* (1967)
SANDY DENNIS Sylvia Barrett, *Up the Down Staircase* (1967)
MAGGIE SMITH Jean Brody, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brody* (1969)

MUSIC

"To Sir, With Love," **LULU** (1967)

BEN STEIN the economics teacher, and **EDIE MCCLURG** Grace the secretary, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986)
SAM KINISON Professor Terguson, *Back to School* (1986)
MARK HARMON gym teacher Freddy Shoop, *Summer School* (1987)
EDWARD JAMES OLMOS Jaime A. Escalante, *Stand and Deliver* (1988)
ROBIN WILLIAMS John Keating, *Dead Poets Society* (1989)
MORGAN FREEMAN Principal Joe Clark, *Lean on Me* (1989)

MUSIC

"Teacher Teacher," **ROCKPILE** (1980)
"Hot for Teacher," **VAN HALEN** (1984)
"Teacher Teacher" **38 SPECIAL** (1984)

TV

ANN NELSON Gertrude Berg, **DEBBIE ALLEN** Mrs. Grant, and **ALBERT HAGUE** Benjamin Shorofsky, *Fame* (1982–87)
JEANETTA ARNETTE Bernadette Meara, *Head of the Class* (1986–90)
HAYLEY MILLS Miss Bliss, *Saved by the Bell* (1987–89)
BEN STEIN (reprising his role as a boring, monotone speaking teacher) *The Wonder Years* (1988–93)

1990s

ESPs get a star turn in *Good Will Hunting* while *The Simpsons* educators make us laugh and wince.

MOVIES

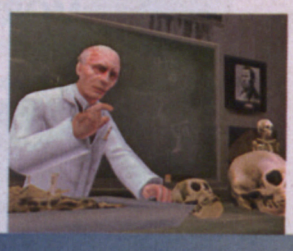
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER John Kimble, *Kindergarten Cop* (1990)
SIOBHAN FALLON bus driver Dorothy, *Forrest Gump* (1994)
RICHARD DREYFUSS Mr. Holland, *Mr. Holland's Opus* (1995)
MICHELLE PFEIFFER Louanne Johnson, *Dangerous Minds* (1995)
TWINK CAPLAN Toby

2000s

Coaches rule and teachers persevere, but some darker roles cast a shadow on the profession.

MOVIES

DENZEL WASHINGTON Coach Herman Boone, *Remember the Titans* (2000)
MICHAEL DOUGLAS Professor Grady Tripp, *Wonder Boys* (2000)
KEVIN SPACEY Eugene Simonet, *Pay It Forward* (2000)
ROBBIE COLTRANE Rubeus Hagrid, **RICHARD HARRIS/MICHAEL GAMBON** Albus Dumbledore, and **MAGGIE SMITH** Minerva McGonagall, Harry Potter movies
KEVIN KLINE William Hundert, *The Emperor's Club* (2002)
MR. RAY Finding Nemo (2003)
JULIA ROBERTS Katherine Ann Watson, *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003)
JACK BLACK Dewey Finn, *School of Rock* (2003)
GÉRARD JUGNOT Clément Mathieu, *The Chorus* (2004)
BILLY BOB THORNTON Coach Gary Gaines, *Friday Night Lights* (2004)
SAMUEL L. JACKSON Coach Ken Carter, *Coach Carter* (2005)
RYAN GOSLING Dan Dunne, *Half Nelson* (2006)



DORIS DAY: BETTMANN/CORBIS; TO SIR WITH LOVE: SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT; MONA LISA SMILE: SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT; SUMMER SCHOOL: WIKIPEDIA; FREEDOM WRITERS: PARAMOUNT PICTURES; BULLY: ROCKSTAR GAMES

What the movie and music business and the media release depends on "what society will pay for and view," says Barbara Beyerbach, an NEA member and State University of New York-Oswego education professor whose research focuses in part on depictions of teachers in pop culture. "That gives you some insight into what mass culture consumes—the way they want to see teachers." Especially troubling to Beyerbach is the lack of Black female teachers depicted in popular culture. "They are so underrepresented, they are invisible, almost completely," she says.

Even when the teachers portrayed are noble characters, it can be damaging, says Beyerbach. "The theme that has persisted is the teacher as individual—hero or buffoon—but never collaborative," she says. In the hero role, one educator fights against indifferent parents, peers, and administrators to change her students' lives. "Often it pits teachers against other teachers," says Beyerbach, "and that's so contrary to what we know works."

Here's a look at how the purveyors of popular culture have drawn you over the past six decades.

—CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI; RESEARCH BY MAREN MACINTYRE AND DANIELLE TAYLOR

1970s

Alice Cooper's howling anthem about teachers' "dirty looks" would be a precursor of things to come.

MOVIES

JON VOIGHT Pat Conroy, *Conrack* (1974)
DIANE KEATON Theresa Dunn, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977)
SID CAESAR Coach Calhoun, and **EVE ARDEN** Principal McGee, *Grease* (1978)

MUSIC

"Teacher I Need You," **ELTON JOHN** (1972)
"School's Out," **ALICE COOPER** (1972)

TV

GABRIEL KAPLAN Gabe Kotter, *Welcome Back, Kotter* (1975–79)

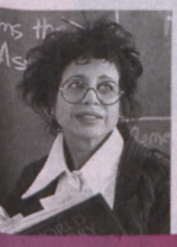
1980s

One teacher got his class to "Stand and Deliver" while another bored his to tears. Bueller?... Bueller?

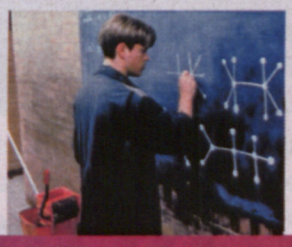
MOVIES

ANNE MEARA Mrs. Sherwood, *Fame* (1980)
RICHARD PRYOR bus driver Joe Braxton, *Bustin' Loose* (1981)
RAY WALSTON Mr. Hand, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982)
NICK NOLTE Alex Jurel, *Teachers* (1984)
JOHN KAPELOS Carl the Janitor, *The Breakfast Club* (1985)
GENE HACKMAN Coach Norman Dale, *Hoosiers* (1986)

Geist, and **WALLACE SHAWN** Wendell Hall, *Clueless* (1995)
BRIDGETTE WILSON Veronica Vaughn, *Billy Madison* (1995)
EDDIE MURPHY Professor Julius Kelp, *The Nutty Professor* (1996)
TOM BERENGER Jonathan Shale, *The Substitute* (1996)



JON LOVITZ Richard Clark, *High School High* (1996)
JENNIFER LOPEZ Miss Marquez, and **BILL COSBY** Lawrence Woodruff, *Jack* (1996)



MATT DAMON custodian Will Hunting, *Good Will Hunting* (1997)
KEVIN KLINE Howard Brackett, *In & Out* (1997)
JON STEWART Professor Edward Furlong, *The Faculty* (1998)
OLIVIA WILLIAMS Rosemary Cross, *Rushmore* (1998)
AVERY BROOKS Dr. Bob Sweeney, *American History X* (1998)
MERYL STREEP Roberta Guaspari, *Music of the Heart* (1999)
HELEN MIRREN Eve Tingle, *Teaching Mrs. Tingle* (1999)

TV

DENNIS HASKINS Mr. Belding, *Saved By the Bell* (1989–93)
MRS. KRABAPPLE, Mrs. Hoover, Principal Skinner, Groundskeeper Willie, Otto the Bus Driver, Lunchlady Doris, *The Simpsons* (late 1989–present)
WILLIAM DANIELS George Feeney, *Boy Meets World* (1993–00)
MR. ADLER, Mr. Mackey, Chef, Mr. and Ms. Garrison, *South Park* (1997–present)

CATE BLANCHETT Sheba Hart, and **JUDI DENCH** Barbara Covett, *Notes on a Scandal* (2006)
MATTHEW PERRY Ron Clark, *The Ron Clark Story* (2006)
HILARY SWANK Erin Gruwell, *Freedom Writers* (2007)

VIDEO GAMES

Bully (2007)

MUSIC

"Teacher's Pet," **B5** (2002)
"The Art Teacher," **RUFUS WAINWRIGHT** (2005)

TV

Boston Public (2000–04)
KYLE CHANDLER Eric Taylor, and **CONNIE BRITTON** counselor Tami Taylor, *Friday Night Lights* (2006)

When art imitates life

Mark Campayno, a music teacher from Sterling, Virginia, is much calmer than frenetic actor Jack Black, but like Black's character in School of Rock, Campayno teaches his students everything from Ozzy Ozbourne and Jimi Hendrix to the Beatles and Oasis. Read more about the real-life School of Rock teacher (he even plays clips from the movie in class!) at www.nea.org/ref?RockSchool. While there, tell us if you know a real-life counterpart to a pop culture educator.

GREASE: BRIANSDRIVEINTHEATER.COM; CLUELESS: PARAMOUNT PICTURES; GOOD WILL HUNTING: MIRAMAX FILMS; MRS. KRABAPPLE: FOX; SCHOOL OF ROCK: PARAMOUNT PICTURES; POPCORN AND SODA: RAFA IRUSTA

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CONT1007

Artistic License

In a growing number of schools, professionals trained in psychology and painting help reach at-risk students.

BY JOHN ROSALES

A FEW YEARS AGO, Leon could not express in words the emotional pain he felt by having to attend class. So he skipped school a lot.

"I was a wreck," says the 18-year-old, who spoke on the condition that his real name not be used. "Then I started painting."

After he picked up a paintbrush, Leon says he learned through art to cope with erratic behavior, low self-esteem, and an undisciplined lifestyle that almost caused him to drop out.

"When I zone in on a painting, it's almost like a high," he says. "Throughout the whole day, I'm calm."

But Leon is not enrolled in an art class. He does not study drawing, portraiture, or art history. A senior, Leon has produced about three oil paintings a week since freshman year, though none have ever been graded or critiqued by an art teacher. Instead, Leon interacts with Patricia Isis, a school art therapist who provides individual and small-group counseling services with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Florida.

"My hunch is that [Leon] might have dropped out of school,"

PHOTOS BY PEDRO PORTAL

Under the guidance of art therapist **Patricia Isis** (opposite), 18-year-old **Leon** has produced about three paintings a week since freshman year, a sampling of which are shown here. Art therapy has helped Leon cope with his emotions and stay in school.

she says. "His art therapy session became a safe place to come to and be accepted."

Trained in both art and psychology, Isis uses painting, sculpture, dance, music, and other art forms to help at-risk students identify and reconcile emotional conflicts. Through art therapy, students can non-verbally communicate while providing the therapist with a tangible way to evaluate and treat behavioral issues.

"The artwork is never judged or criticized," says Isis. "No, no, no—that's art class. We validate, explore, strengthen. Art therapy is their medicine."

Although Isis does not teach art, she shares similar goals with art teachers, including the encouragement of self-expression and self-discovery.

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools Clinical Art Therapy Department began in 1979 and has grown to include 20 full-time art therapists, more than any other school system in the nation. They treat about 400 primary and secondary students a year who are distracted from classroom learning by emotional issues, learning disabilities, speech and language irregularities, and other behavioral disorders. Some students are clinically depressed, while others, for example, have been abandoned by their parents, or physically or sexually abused.

"We tend to service students who are less verbal," says Isis, a therapist for 27 years. "By using the creative process of art, we can improve and enhance their mental and emotional well-being."

While art therapy is not a routine part of most student service systems nationwide, Cathy Malchiodi, an official with the American Art Therapy Association, predicts this will change.

"Art therapy is becoming more mainstream," she says, pointing to the current convergence of education and health care, along with a movement in human services toward student service integration.

"Student services in schools are being redefined," she says.

> "My hunch is that [Leon] might have dropped out of school. His art therapy session became a safe place to come to and be accepted." — **Patricia Isis**

PHOTOS BY PEDRO PORTAL

"Since 9/11, there's been a surge in human services that help people process trauma."

Which is precisely Isis' goal. "My focus is more on the process than the product," she says. "After a student completes a painting [in therapy], he can relax...manage his stress, ventilate his emotions on canvas."

TO BECOME ELIGIBLE for art therapy services, students must be identified as having emotional difficulties. To receive therapy in Miami-Dade, for instance, students must have a recommendation from a school psychologist, social worker, or other mental health practitioner stating that non-traditional forms of therapy may best meet the student's needs. Students also need a recommendation from an authority figure from school or home recognizing the student's tendency to gravitate toward artistic expression.

Art therapists do not work alone. They often collaborate with teachers, parents, and other school personnel to help students get in touch with their living environments, gain control over their emotions, improve social skills, and release pent-up frustrations through artistic expression.

"Art validates their emotions," Isis says. "It validates how they think and what conflicts are getting in their way at school or home"—conflicts that in some cases could lead to suicide, homicide, or some other form of violence.

A painting of a burning building might help an art therapist detect the potential for fire-starting, for example. "The artwork might reveal a tendency to want to torch something," says Isis, who has a doctorate in expressive therapies, which includes using poetry, dance, music, and the visual arts to help adjust the mental well-being of a patient. "These kids don't have the words to put to their pain."

While art therapists are distinct from art teachers, they're also different from counselors and psychologists. Counselors rely on verbal communication to analyze a student's feelings and personal issues. School psychologists emphasize behavioral evaluation for the purpose of diagnosing and prescribing remedies. Art therapists are trained to recognize barriers to learning, diagnose emotional problems, and provide individualized interventions and services. Part of their goal is to help students reach their educational potential so they can perform well in the classroom and other public settings.

"We deal with unconscious messages—but one drawing or artwork is not enough," says Isis. "You need a series of pieces."

A 12-year-old that Isis worked with, for instance, had experienced a traumatic emotional shock. She had been abandoned by her parents in a house at a young age. "She would babble and scribble on paper," Isis says. "She was out of touch with reality."

After two years of art therapy, the girl began to speak in coherent sentences and draw realistic figures and landscapes.

"Her imagery development paralleled her speech development," Isis says. "You can see from how a child is drawing, how they are developing neurologically, cognitively, and emotionally."

ART THERAPY IS GAINING a higher profile, both in the art world and in the workplace. In April, the Miami-Dade district's art therapy department and the ARTCENTER/South Florida Gallery in Miami Beach sponsored an exhibit of 95 pieces produced by art therapy students from elementary to high school. The exhibit did not include their names, only a note about their age, gender, and the image content.

CareerBuilder.com, one of the nation's leading recruitment resources, identified art therapy as one of the top 10 "hot jobs" for 2007, based on demographic shifts, legislative changes, business trends, and consumer behavior. Employment opportunities for art therapists exist in health care, community agencies, independent practice, and at schools. The salary of a school art therapist is commensurate with school psychologists and teachers.

In many states, NEA categorizes art therapists as teachers. However, some states treat them as education support professionals (ESPs), under the health and student services category.

To work for a school district, therapists are required to have a master's degree, pass a national board exam, and have clinical or education experience.

"You need to understand mental problems, such as attention deficit disorder, and how it might manifest in an art form," Malchiodi says. "One student [in a drawing] showed a huge brain floating out of the classroom window. He could draw how his attention disorder was getting to him, but still couldn't concentrate in class." nea

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FOR A SLIDESHOW OF LEON'S WORK WITH COMMENTARY BY PATRICIA ISIS, GO TO WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?ARTTHERAPY

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools

POOR HEALTH CARE FOR STUDENTS MEANS LOWER PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOL. BY KRISTEN LOSCHERT

You wouldn't think a regular dental checkup could mean the difference between life and death. But that was the case earlier this year for 12-year-old Deamonte Driver, a seventh-grader in Prince George's County, Maryland. What started as a tooth infection, which a dentist could have corrected with a routine tooth extraction, ultimately led to a fatal brain infection for the boy. But Driver never saw a dentist—by the time his family found a provider who would accept Medicaid, their insurance coverage was cancelled.

Nationwide, 9 million children do not have health insurance, and many others lack access to medical and dental care. Most are from lower-income families. Research shows that the uninsured are less likely to receive the routine health and dental checkups most families take for granted. In fact, 28 percent of uninsured children do not have a usual place for medical care, compared with just 2 to 3 percent of children covered by private and public insurance programs, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

While the lack of preventative medical care does not always have fatal consequences, it does impact a child's overall well-being, along with his or her performance in school.

> "There are very few primary care physicians located in low-income communities."
>
> —Richard Rothstein

In general, lower-income children are in poorer health than middle-class children, a situation that contributes to academic disparities between poor and affluent students, says Richard Rothstein, an analyst with the Economic Policy Institute, in his book *Class and Schools*.

For instance, low-income children with asthma are 80 percent more likely than middle-class students to miss seven or more days of school a year as a result of their disease because their symptoms go untreated more often, Rothstein says. To add to the problem, low-income families often simply can't find a doctor who will see them consistently.

"There are very few primary care physicians located in low-income communities," Rothstein explains. "Health insurance entitles families to emergency care for their children, but does not, practically speaking, lead to the routine and preventative care that middle-class families take for granted."

A study in California, for example, found that high-poverty urban neighborhoods with high concentrations of minority residents had just one primary care physician for every 4,000 residents. More affluent White neighborhoods, meanwhile, had one doctor for every 1,200 residents.

"Poor children lose 30 percent more days from school than the non-poor, on average," Rothstein writes in his book. "The difference in school attendance, attributable to differences in access to health care alone, causes a difference in average achievement between black and white children. Good teaching can't do much for children who aren't in school."

Publicly subsidized insurance programs, like Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), have improved health care access for roughly 34 million children. (Medicaid covers children living at or near the federal poverty level, while SCHIP covers low-income children ineligible for Medicaid.) A Kaiser Family Foundation report even found that children enrolled in SCHIP showed improved school attendance, greater attention in class, and increased participation in school activities. But federal funding for the 10-year-old SCHIP was due to expire September 30, and at press time, the President was threatening to veto efforts by Congress to expand the program.

"Working people who don't have health insurance tend to be in the lower-income bracket and couldn't afford coverage even if their employers offered it," explains Carol Malone, senior health care specialist in NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy. "SCHIP targets those children."

As part of the National Coalition on Health Care, NEA supports national health care reform, including better, more accessible health care for all. nea

PHOTO: PAUL BURNS

EDUCATORS GOT GAME

Using video games and simulations in the classroom.

BY CINDY LONG

The U.S. military uses video games to train forces. Doctors use them to practice surgery. And education technology experts are encouraging teachers to play simulation-themed games in the classroom to help students think more critically. By building cities, empires, cultures—or even zoos—students enter virtual worlds where they must rely on creative problem-solving and analytical skills.

Can students really learn from video games or simulations?

David McDivitt, who teaches world history and sociology at Oak Hill High School in Converse, Indiana, says games teach his students important lessons about cause and effect. In the game *Making History,* for example, students act as leaders of different countries during World War II. They have to make strategic decisions and anticipate the consequences, such as making a treaty with one country or violating a treaty with another. Their chosen strategies can also impact the outcome of the war, providing "excellent teachable moments," McDivitt says.

"I've had kids tell me they don't think the war would have lasted as long if countries had been more aggressive with Hitler earlier on," he says. "They can read that in a textbook, but they're much more likely to remember it after seeing it played out."

In McDivitt's sociology class, students play *The Sims,* where they control the day-to-day lives of characters called Sims (short for simulations), choosing their careers, steering their social lives, and plotting their futures.

Students learn by assigning social roles to their Sims. McDivitt explains to the class that he's a father, a teacher, a coach, a husband, a brother, and a son. "Which role is the most important?" he asks. "How do they overlap?"

"The students then apply it to their own lives," says McDivitt. "In high school, kids are in transition—they start to think about whether being a son, a daughter, a friend, a sibling, or college student is their most important role."

What other games work in the classroom?

A pioneer of educational video games is *Civilization,* says Bill MacKenty, head of instructional design at Hunter College High School in New York City and a former Massachusetts elementary school teacher. In *Civilization*—called "Civ" by devotees—students literally build a civilization and learn how it survives through the ages with technology (like the invention of the wheel), agriculture, commerce, and the role of government.

SimCity is another favorite of MacKenty's. While planning and creating a virtual city, the game shows students how to build revenue through taxes, provide water and power sources, build industrial and residential zones, and learn why distances between them are important.

Other titles he recommends are *Age of Mythology, Age of Empires,* and any title by the company *Muzzy Lane.*

Aren't video games violent?

Games like *Grand Theft Auto* are popular with kids, but are "spectacularly inappropriate for the classroom," MacKenty says. Look for games with age-rating labels and do your research to weed out the violent titles.

Doesn't gaming isolate children from the real world?

We often think of gaming as a diversion from reality, says David Williamson Shaffer, an education science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and author of *How Video Games Help Children Learn,* but they're actually more real than some of the experiences kids have in school. "Elections for student body can be a powerful way for kids to understand government and democracy, but not all students can run, and what you can really do as president is limited," he says.

But in a game like *The Political Machine,* students become campaign managers for a presidential campaign, and they decide on everything from platforms and fundraising strategies to advertising messages.

Shaffer, a former history and math teacher, was frustrated by his school's emphasis on testing basic skills, which he believes does nothing to prepare students for the technological world.

nea.org

TEST DRIVE A GAME ONLINE, SHARE STRATEGIES WITH OTHER EDUCATORS, AND FIND MORE RESOURCES AT WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?GAMING.

STUDENT ART: DAVID CLARK; PHOTO: GRANT CURRIE

Games teach students to be innovators, he says. He now works in a research group that field tests games that "help students learn to think like engineers, urban planners, journalists, lawyers, and other innovative professionals, giving them the tools they need to survive in a changing world," according to the group's Web site, Epistemic Games.

OK, I'm convinced. How do I get started?

"Play games! Play lots of games. Find out what they're like, and talk to other people about what games they're using," advises Brock Dubbels, who teaches language arts and literature at Richard Green Central School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He says that after playing a few different titles, you'll see how they can apply to your teaching goals.

Dubbels uses the literary elements of games—such as genre, tone, plot, setting, and characters—to increase student comprehension and critical evaluation skills. "All games have a story," he says. "They're built on traditional narrative elements and film theory, but have interactivity that students find engaging."

He emphasizes, however, that games are merely tools that help teachers achieve pre-established curricular goals. A video game is "a killer app in the classroom," but it's a means, not an end, he says.

Bill MacKenty agrees that goal-setting is key. "You have to have a conversation before and after the game; you have to ask questions and get students writing about what they've experienced, or that critical thinking isn't crystallized," he says. "If you stick a kid in front of the computer and expect something magical to happen, you're going to be disappointed. You need to ask, 'what are my objectives?' You need planning and assessment. It's just good teaching."

Plus, it's just plain fun. "'We're going to play a game' sounds a lot more appealing to a class than, 'We're going to summarize a story and analyze a plot diagram,'" says Dubbels.

Dance Dance Revolution!

Say good-bye to the do-si-do. Dance Dance Revolution is the latest craze in gym class. Kids burn calories, build bone density, and fight obesity by stepping on the appropriate button on a dance pad to follow the arrows displayed on a big video screen, all to the rhythm of techno, Latin, or pop music blasting in the background.

"It's an outstanding workout, and it's a lot more fun than jumping rope or sit-ups," says Madison Elementary School gym teacher Mike Matejcik. "It's also fun for kids who don't feel confident about their athletic abilities. Everyone loves to dance!"

Mike Matejcik

PROBLEM-SOLVER

Our school can't afford to purchase games and costly user licenses.

A solution:

Ask your students to bring in their own games and their gaming platforms, suggests Brock Dubbels of Richard Green Central School.

Before asking his students to bring in their PlayStations, Xboxes, and GameCubes, Dubbels sent home letters to parents to explain why. "I told them the games would be used as part of rigorous, thoughtful, and relevant lessons, and encouraged volunteers to come into the classroom to participate and see for themselves how the games would be used," he says.

Older, and cheaper, versions of games can also be found on Craigslist or eBay, and Dubbels says people often will donate them after buying the newest version.

Some of my students aren't gamers and don't feel comfortable with the technology.

A solution:

"Not every kid loves games, but not every kid likes a worksheet or lecture either, so be prepared to 'sell' the game to that group," says David McDivitt of Oak Hill High School.

"Explain that it's not about winning or losing, and that the outcome of the game does not impact the grade," he says. "Be clear about the goals of the game, and explain that following the goals is more important than being a good player. Also, it's helpful to team students who are new to gaming with students who play them a lot."

What's your advice?

Share it with your colleagues at www.nea.org/ref?gamesadvice

bulletin board

BEST BOARDS

Not Your Grandma's ABCs

I teach a special lesson linking literacy and dance called "Can You Dance Your ABCs?" The students work in groups to create the shapes of the letters of the alphabet with their bodies. The students are very creative, using all different parts of their bodies to get the letters just right. The goal of this lesson is to help my students, many of whom are English-language learners, "physicalize" the shapes of the letters to better recognize them when reading and writing. My teaching philosophy is strongly rooted in the belief that learning is more comprehensive if you educate the whole child—mind, body, soul—and dance/movement is an ideal way to make a lesson stick.

ALLISON PARSLEY
K–3 dance specialist
Brooklyn, New York

Top TIPS

Meeting Paperwork Deadlines

Put a pen in your staff mailbox. When you pick up your mail, check through it quickly and see if there are any forms to fill out and sign. If so, grab the pen from your box, fill them out, and put them in the appropriate person's box immediately whenever possible. This technique will greatly reduce your pile of paperwork and keep you ahead of deadlines. Someone shared this tip with me early in my career, and it has proven to be one of the best time management and paper management tips I ever received!

DIANA BEATTY
High school math teacher
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Celebrating Students

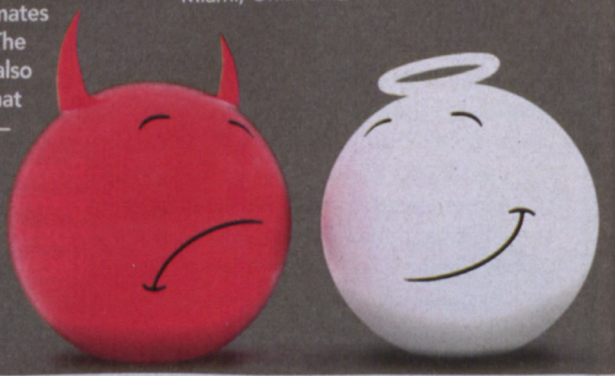
I want my middle school students to celebrate entering their teen years in a meaningful way. At the beginning of the school year, I explain the history of the Nobel Prize and how it is awarded to people who have contributed to the good of humankind. On a giant wipe-off monthly calendar, I write all the student birthdays for each month and select one day a month I call "Nobel Prize Day." On this day, I recognize each birthday recipient for that month and state a minimum of three positive, uplifting, and reinforcing contributions he or she has made to the class; their classmates add to my comments. The "Nobel prize-winners" also get to pick a number that corresponds to a prize—candy bar, science homework coupon, small toy, etc. It's fun, uplifting, and brings lots of smiles.

DONNA VANDER WENDE
Seventh-grade science teacher
Glen Rock, New Jersey

Tracking Behavior

To keep track of good and bad notes on students, fill out the dates for each month on a blank calendar. On the days you have trouble with students, or they do something neat, list their names and a one- or two-word reminder on the square for that particular day. It's very easy to look back at the end of the month to see how things went. And it gives you a quick and helpful overview when parents want to know how their child has done that month.

JANET BEGGERLY
Second-grade teacher
Miami, Oklahoma



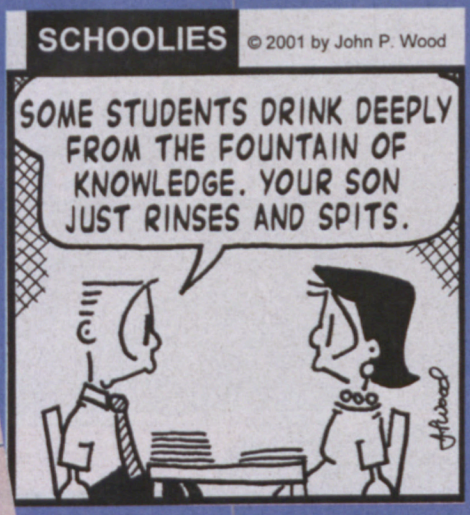
BULLETIN BOARD PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ALLISON PARSLEY; TEACHER AT DESK: NATHAN HAM; GOOD AND BAD BALLOONS: FCKNCG

WORD PLAY

REVISIONIST HISTORY

During a vocabulary lesson, I asked my students to make an asterisk next to one of the words we were studying. A little boy raised his hand and asked, "What's an asterisk?" Another boy got very excited, waved his hand in the air, and said, "I know, it's what killed the dinosaurs!"

KELLY TOKITA
First-grade teacher
Idaho Falls, Idaho

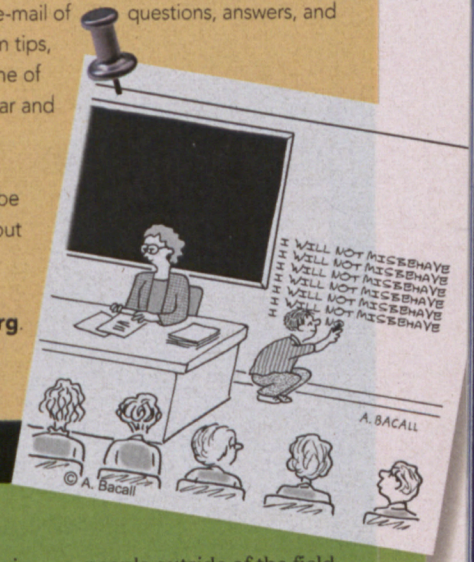


SEND IT IN

Got a great classroom bulletin board, cool project, or creative lesson?

Send photos and descriptions of your bulletin boards, class projects, and best lesson plans to: **ckopkowski@nea.org**. Please include your name, your job, and the community and state where you work.

For a weekly e-mail of questions, answers, and practical classroom tips, join Works4Me, one of NEA's most popular and useful services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to **Lyris@list.nea.org**.



COLLEAGUES' HELPDESK

What's your advice for working effectively with colleagues?

ANSWER: FOOD! Our teachers' room table is a feast of goodies and yummy snacks. If "breaking bread" creates a bond, then mission accomplished. From announcing a pregnancy to bracing for one of our own facing cancer, it's impossible not to feel nurtured and supported when surrounded by good friends, the aroma of fresh coffee, and cinnamon buns.

GENEVIEVE PETRILLO
Belleville, New Jersey

ANSWER: When I started out in the classroom at age 24, I had great respect for my colleagues, all of whom were older than I was. Twenty years later, I find I need to remember to be patient with the actions and opinions of those younger than I am. This has been a great lesson. If we are to inspire our students to respect others, that behavior needs to start with us.

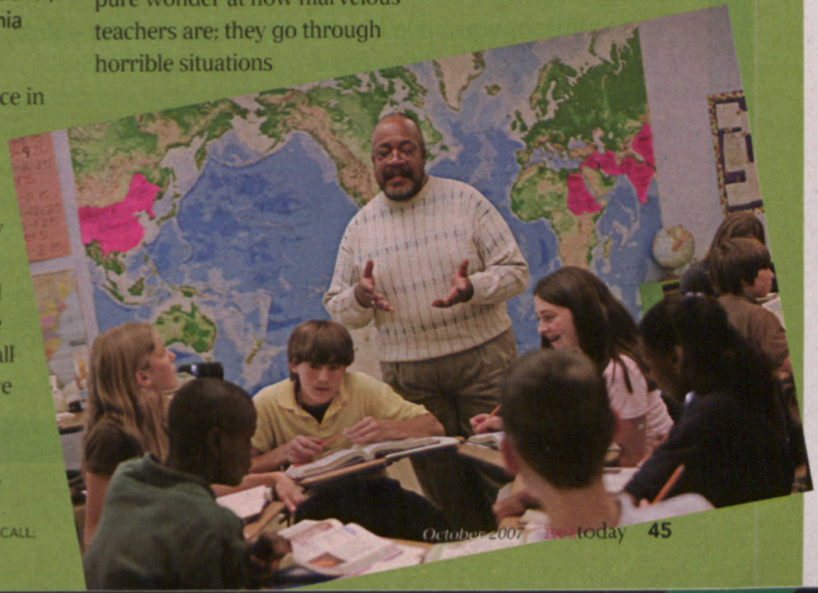
ELLEN MULHOLLAND
seventh-grade teacher,
Alameda, California

ANSWER: Every once in a while, I have to step back and remind myself that even though we, as teachers, may have different ways to go about our job, we still are all in this together for the same reason—THE KIDS! We've all had those moments when we disagree with a colleague; however, I've found that reminding myself that we're both doing what we believe is in the best interest of the student can resolve any tension.

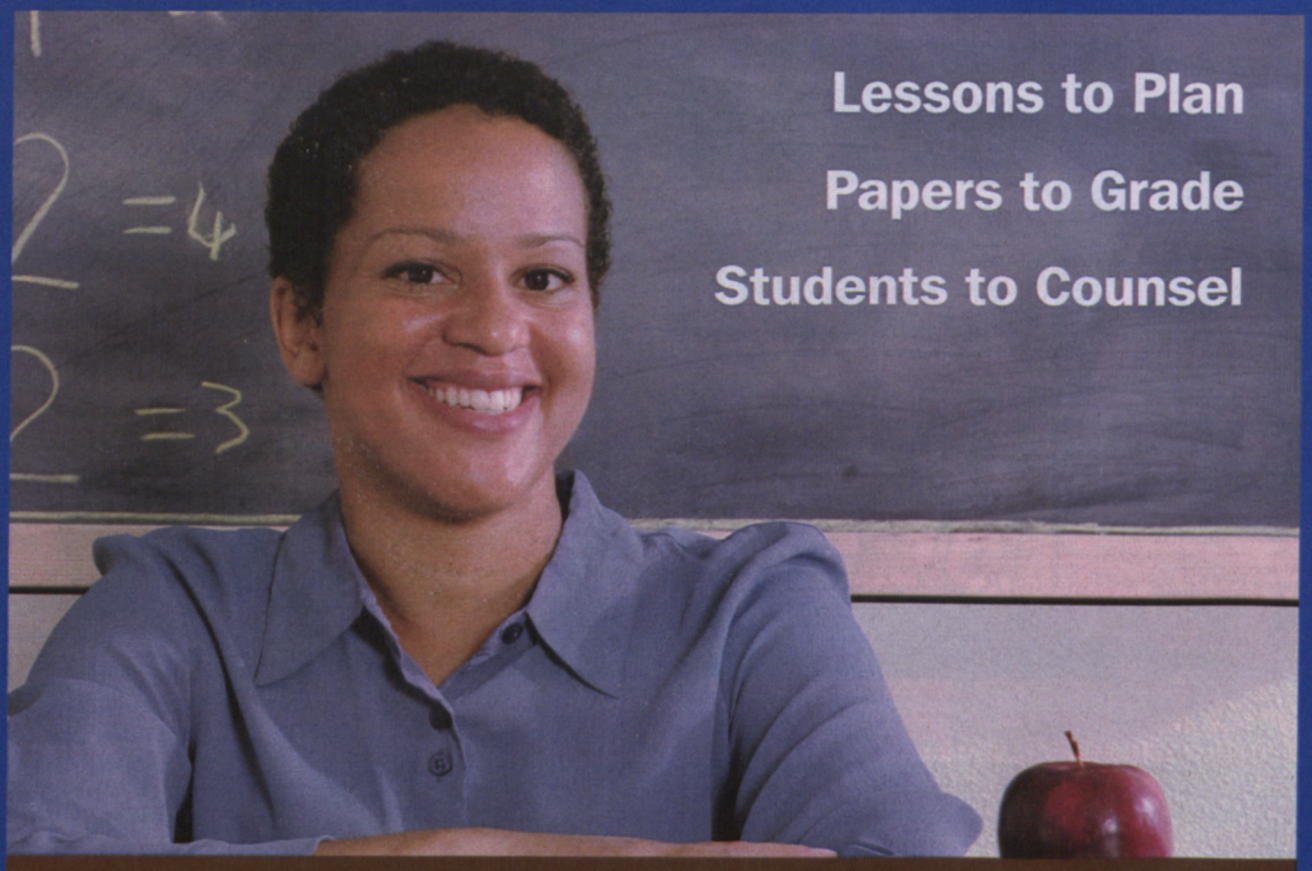
BRIAN ERSALESI
High school teacher, Midland Park, New Jersey

ANSWER: During one of the hottest summers on record, I worked with a group of educators in extremely adverse conditions and somehow everybody came through like troopers. My "take-away" was pure wonder at how marvelous teachers are; they go through horrible situations people outside of the field rarely appreciate, and they perform like saints. Ironically, I've found educators work most effectively as a team when they face adversity (and we often do in urban schools). Teachers just need more common planning time to communicate about teaching. We also need space to unwind, share "war stories," and build bonds.

MARCI MANN
High school teacher,
New York, New York



ASTEROID IMAGE: MICHAEL D. BROWN; CARTOON: JOHN P. WOOD; BLACKBOARD CARTOON: A. BACALL; CINNAMON BUN PHOTO: LIZ VAN STEENBURGH; CLASSROOM PHOTO: JOCELYN AUGUSTINO



Drive to Bookstore?!?

With all you have to do, getting to the bookstore may seem impossible. That's why NEA has developed an online bookstore that contains dozens of professional titles just for you. It's called the **NEA Professional Library**. Find out what's new at the **Professional Library** by subscribing to ***First Edition***!

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HIT THE ROAD WITH LESS TRAVEL STRESS

Tips for staying calm while staying on course.

BY DEBORAH WILBURN

Would you ever plan to spend nine hours straight in car? No one does, but a major accident last summer on a heavily traveled bridge in the suburbs of New York City made that nightmare scenario a reality for scores of trapped travelers. And when it comes to the friendly skies, who can forget the JetBlue debacle last winter that left travelers stranded for days? These are extreme travel traumas, but we all know that missed connections, canceled flights, and traffic jams can give anyone a pain in the neck—literally. Here are some steps you can take on the road to tame the tension when things don't go exactly as planned.

Before Departure

Get enough rest the night before your trip. Lack of sleep can make anybody moody and amplify angst from travel snafus.

Next, if you're flying to your destination, be sure to leave enough time to comfortably get to the airport (allowing extra minutes for the unexpected, such as highway construction). There's nothing worse than arriving for take-off with your tension level already at cruising altitude. Check the Transportation Security Administration Web site to see your airport's estimated security line wait time (www.tsa.gov). And don't forget to put your liquid and gel toiletries in a one-quart clear bag.

Hurry Up and Wait

Let's say you get to the airport in plenty of time, but the mile-long security line is moving slowly. Very slowly. If you feel stress building, certified yoga instructor Susan Rubin, owner of Sage Yoga in Armonk, New York, suggests that you pay attention to your posture before your

PHOTO: MEIKO ARQUILLOS

> "Deep breathing calms the nervous system." —Susan Rubin

body gets tied up in knots. Don't slouch to one side, but stand very straight and become aware of all four corners of each foot pressing into the floor. Next, pay attention to your breath. Inhale and exhale through your nose slowly and deeply. Count your breaths from one to 10, then start over. "Deep breathing calms the nervous system," says Rubin.

On the Plane

Sitting crammed into an uncomfortable seat can produce lower back tension. To counter it, Rubin recommends doing a gentle, easy twist. Sit up straight, leaning forward slightly. If you're twisting to the right, put your right hand on the right armrest and your left hand on your left knee. Inhale, and as you exhale turn your body to the right from the waist up and look over your right shoulder. Repeat on the other side.

Calming the Kids

It goes without saying that books, portable games, and healthy snacks are a necessity. But Janice Davis, mother of two and author of *A Kid, A Grownup & A Travel Bug* recommends talking to your children in advance about what might be in store and how they should behave.

Also, keep a sense of humor, says Penny Donnenfeld, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in New York City. "Say things like, 'I wish I could make this car grow wings and fly over all these cars,' or 'This makes me feel like making a funny face'—then make a face and encourage children to do the same."

And if you don't want your kids to gripe and moan, don't start whining yourself. If you set a positive tone, the delay may not be enjoyable, but it should be tolerable.

World Wide Travel Web

Three sites to help stretch your vacation funds further and make getting there easier.

Drive for Less

NEA members enjoy up to 25 percent off rentals from Alamo and $20 off weekly rentals from Hertz when a car is booked through Member Benefits at www.neamb.com. NEA has also partnered with Collette Vacations to give members a special discount on land costs of trips here and abroad, including education-based tours planned in conjunction with Smithsonian Travel Adventures and A&E Television. Go to Member Discounts at www.neamb.com to take advantage of the offer.

Find Cheap Gas

With the average cost per gallon hovering around $3 at press time, fueling up can put a serious dent in your vacation budget. But if you log onto www.gasbuddy.com, you can locate an area's cheapest source of gas, wherever your travels may take you.

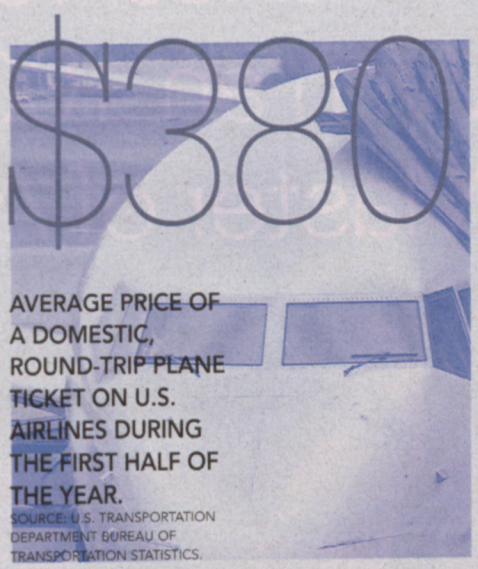
Have a Seat

Check out www.seatguru.com while booking your next flight, and you'll never get stuck in a bad seat again. This award-winning site has maps of 275 planes from more than 40 airlines, and offers specific information about each seat, such as proximity to restrooms, whether the seat back has a limited recline or leg room, and much more.

HOW I... Protected my luggage

Safeguard your valuables

Stricter rules about carry-ons mean passengers are packing more than ever into their checked luggage. Oregon high school teacher Doug Winn says: "Mark cameras and laptops (if you must pack them) with your driver's license number. Make sure that all luggage has your contact info inside and out. Keep your valuables (driver's license, credit cards, passport, and cash) with you. Keep copies of important info in a separate place among your luggage along with a copy left at home or somewhere that you can contact if need be." Also, lock luggage with a Transportation Security Administration-approved lock from Travel Sentry or Safe Skies; others might get broken off by screeners. Even with a locked bag, TSA tells travelers not to pack jewelry, cash, laptops, electronic items, and undeveloped film.



AVERAGE PRICE OF A DOMESTIC, ROUND-TRIP PLANE TICKET ON U.S. AIRLINES DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR.

SOURCE: U.S. TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS.

Eating on the Run

What do you do at an airport or highway rest stop when the food choices are high in calories and fat? Margie Greenberg, a registered dietician in Mount Kisco, New York, says to avoid fast food altogether by packing a cooler. But if that's impractical, here are her picks for times when you're stuck chowing down in the fast food lane.

Note: Nutrition calculators can be found on the Web sites of most fast food restaurants.

	PIZZA HUT	MCDONALD'S	KFC	TCBY	STARBUCKS
best meal choice	**Fit 'n Delicious Veggie Pizza (1 slice from 12" pie)** 150 cal., 4 g. fat, 420 mg. sodium	**Asian Salad with grilled chicken & Newman's Own Low-Fat Sesame Ginger Dressing** Salad: 300 cal., 10 g. fat, 890 mg. sodium; dressing: 90 cal., 2.5 g. fat	**Original Recipe Chicken Breast (1 piece, no skin, breading) and corn on the cob** 210 cal., 3.5 g. fat, 530 mg. sodium	**Raspberry DeLITE Smoothie without yogurt (20 oz.)** 240 cal., 0 g. fat, 15 mg. sodium	**Reduced-fat Turkey Bacon, Cholesterol-free Egg and Reduced-Fat White Cheddar Sandwich** 350 calories, 11 g. fat, 20 g. protein, 820 mg. sodium
best snack choice	**Side salad with 2 Tbs. Lite Ranch dressing** 60 cal., 6 g. fat, 260 mg. sodium	**Apple Dippers with Low-Fat Caramel Dip** 70 cal., 5 g. fat, 35 mg. sodium	**Caesar side salad with fat-free ranch dressing** 90 cal., 3 g. fat, 550 mg. sodium	**Chocolate Chocolate Hand-Scooped Yogurt (1/2 cup)** 120 cal., 3.5 g. fat, 50 mg. sodium	**Reduced-fat Cinnamon Swirl Coffee Cake** 300 cal., 8 g. fat, 350 mg. sodium
back-up choice	**Thin 'n Crispy Cheese Pizza (1 slice from 14" pie)** 280 cal., 12 g. fat, 810 mg. sodium	**Hamburger** 250 cal., 9 g. fat	**Roasted Caesar Salad (with chicken) and fat-free ranch dressing (no croutons)** 250 cal., 8 g. fat, 1,240 mg. sodium	**96 Percent Fat-Free Soft Serve Frozen Yogurt (1/2 cup)** 140 cal., 3 g. fat, 20 g. sugar, 23 g. carbs, 60 mg. sodium	**Tall Caffé Misto (called Café Au Lait in some regions) and one Almond Biscotti** 200 cal., 6 g. fat, 175 mg. sodium
our panel says	"The pizza is thin and tasty, but wouldn't fill me up for a whole meal. But it would be perfect if you're getting on a flight—not too heavy or greasy." —Staff tester	"Prevent an upset stomach by avoiding the hamburger. Instead, opt to eat a delicious Asian Salad." —Adrianne Svitak, Student Member, Nebraska	"Not the best Caesar salad I've ever had, but it's not bad for fast food. As a vegetarian, it's nice to know that I have at least one option at KFC." —Staff tester	"I tried the Raspberry DeLITE when I had a layover and it was great. Didn't weigh me down like a cinnamon roll would have." —Judy Smith, paraprofessional, Oregon	"If ever I'm stressed and rushing, I love to visit Starbucks, even for five minutes. The smell of coffee alone is wonderful." —Millie Soroe, physical education teacher, Louisiana

AIRPLANE PHOTO: RACHELLE BURNSIDE; FOOD ITEMS: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

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CAL U

in person

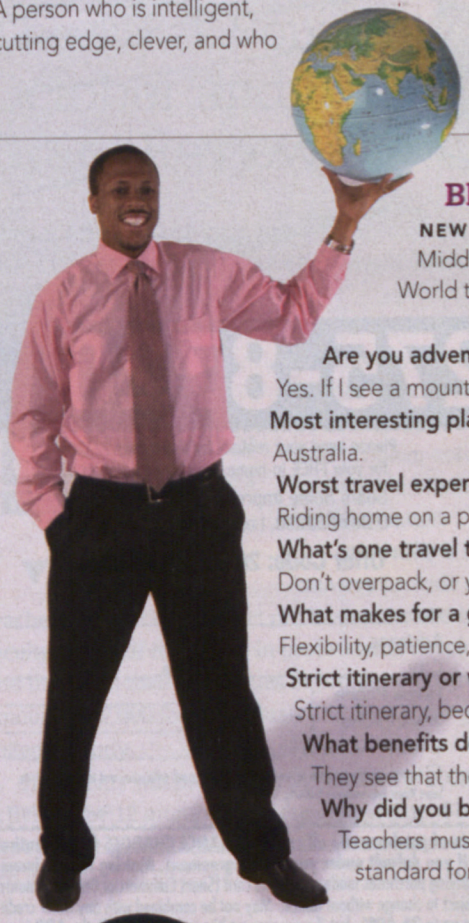
Laura Preble, 46

SANTEE, CALIFORNIA

High school English teacher
Author of teen lit hit *The Queen Geek Social Club*

How did the book idea come to you?
I woke at 3 a.m. with the title in my head and started writing.
What's scarier—writing the first page or the last page?
The middle is the tough part. I usually know the starting point and the destination of a story, but the characters often determine how we get there, and sometimes they get confused.
How long did it take you to land a publishing deal?
I met an editor at a writers conference whose imprint was looking for "chick lit." I sent her 20 pages and an outline. Two weeks later she called and offered me a two-book deal—a writer's dream!
What was it like reading your first batch of reviews?
Fun and kind of surreal. My favorites, though, are e-mails and comments from people who read the book. I answer everyone personally. (Because, so far, I'm not famous. When I get really big I'll have a pet monkey answer all my e-mails.)
How do you define "geek"?
A person who is intelligent, cutting edge, clever, and who doesn't fit into the mainstream.
Were you a geek in school?
Most definitely. I had a Han Solo poster in my room, memorized the names of all 79 original *Star Trek* episodes, and read *The Lord of the Rings* every summer.
What education issue is most important to you?
Failure to deal with students' personal issues—the things that keep them from succeeding in school. Students drink, smoke, and participate in risky behaviors, but there are very few resources to deal with this. It's not something that can be bubbled into a test booklet, so no one wants to put money into it.
What's the best way to encourage a young writer?
Read their stuff, talk to them about it, and tell them not to give up. I'd been trying to get a book published since I was 16.
Why did you become an NEA member?
Teachers are on the front lines of social change. We are hit with the tidal wave of changing ideals, morals, values, and experiences every day. We need backup. NEA is like our posse.

The Queen Geek Social Club is now in its second printing. Her next book, *Queen Geeks in Love*, is out in November. For a sneak peek, head to www.nea.org/ref?preble.



Blair Todd, 29

NEW CARROLLTON, MARYLAND

Middle school reading and science teacher
World traveler, international tour leader for students

Are you adventurous by nature?
Yes. If I see a mountain, I want to climb it.
Most interesting place you've traveled?
Australia.
Worst travel experience?
Riding home on a plane for 11 hours with malaria.
What's one travel tip you swear by?
Don't overpack, or you won't have room for gifts.
What makes for a good student travel leader?
Flexibility, patience, and openness.
Strict itinerary or wherever the road takes you?
Strict itinerary, because there is so much to see.
What benefits do kids get from travel?
They see that there is more to the world than just America.
Why did you become an NEA member?
Teachers must ensure that great public schools are the standard for our society.

SHORT TAKES

Jacqueline Larry, 58

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Student organizer

Thirty-one years in education wasn't enough for Larry (MAE-Retired), who is spending her golden years organizing student programs for NEA. Six years after retiring, Larry coordinates workshops and conferences for education majors, teaching them about the benefits of the Association. Student feedback from her workshops—Teachers and the Law, Interview Skills, and Classroom Management—has been overwhelmingly appreciative.

"It was a challenge at first," says Larry of her student organizing work, "but I thoroughly enjoy my job."

PEOPLE POLL

What do you look forward to most about fall?
Exercising without the heat—31%; kids are back in school—23%; no more TV reruns!—23%; crisp weather means fall sweaters—23% Head to www.nea.org/ref?octperson for this month's poll.

PHOTOS PREBLE: FRED GREAVES; TODD: CHARLES VOTAW; LARRY: STEVE COLSON

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resources

54 **Grants & Awards** This year, grants abound for student service learning projects.
55 **Take Note** Download our free *School Crisis and Recovery Guide*.
56 **Diff'rent Strokes** October 15 is National Multicultural Diversity Day.
59 **In Print** A highly readable exploration of ADD/ADHD from an expert in the field.
59 **Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits** The average retirement age of NEA members is 59. Are you ready?
60 **On the Web** There are "no limits to learning" at ThinkFinity.org.
61 **On TV** Don't miss Ken Burns' remarkable PBS series on World War II.
61 **Books by NEA Members** A former professional athlete shares his philosophy for succeeding in life with youth who want to enter the "big leagues."
62 **Diversity Calendar** *Na zdrowie*! It's Polish American Heritage Month.

Deadlines Approaching for The NEA Foundation's October and November Grant Reviews

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY OCTOBER 15, 2007, FOR BOTH THE *STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS* AND THE *LEARNING & LEADERSHIP GRANTS*

THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS provide $5,000 to improve the academic achievement of students by engaging in critical thinking and problem-solving that deepen knowledge of standards-based subject matter.

LEARNING & LEADERSHIP GRANTS provide opportunities for teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to engage in professional development programs and then lead their colleagues in professional growth. The grant amount is $2,000 for individuals and $5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study.

Recipients will be notified by March 15, 2008. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date. For information about grant guidelines and applications, visit **www.neafoundation.org** or call **(202) 822-7840**.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY NOVEMBER 12, 2007, FOR THE *NEA'S BOOKS ACROSS AMERICA LIBRARY BOOKS AWARDS*

In collaboration with NEA, the NEA Foundation will make approximately 50 awards of $1,000 each to public schools serving economically disadvantaged students to purchase books for school libraries. The 2008 NEA's Books Across America Library Books Awards are made possible with support from individuals who donated to NEA's Books Across America fund. Only award recipients will be notified in writing. A list of award recipients will be posted on the NEA Foundation's Web site by March 3, 2008. For eligibility requirements, visit **www.neafoundation.org/programs/BAA_2007.htm**.

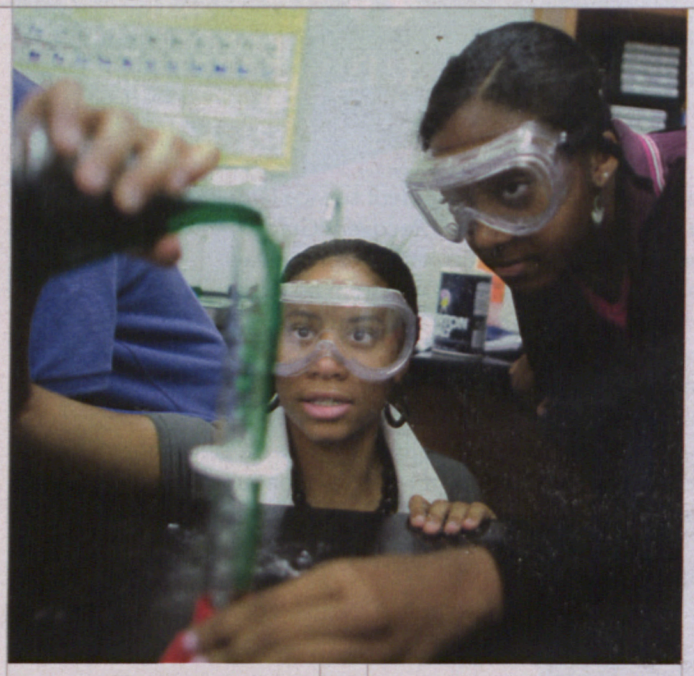
ONE OUTSTANDING YOUNG TEACHER

Do you know a teacher under the age of 40 who demonstrates excellence in the profession, has a positive impact on students, employs creativity in the classroom, and exhibits leadership in his or her school district? Nominate them for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Outstanding Young Educator Award.

Created to recognize an emerging educational leader and share his or her exemplary practices with the education community, the award consists of a check for $10,000; coverage in *Educational Leadership* magazine; and recognition during a general session at next year's ASCD Annual Conference and Exhibit Show.

Fall nominations close **October 15, 2007**. For additional information, visit **www.ascd.org**, click on "Programs," and look for the Outstanding Young Educator Award link.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



HAVE A FUTURE 'JUNIOR NOBELIST' IN YOUR CLASS?

Each year Intel conducts its precollege Science Talent Search (STS), a nationwide competition honoring outstanding young scientists who have completed original research projects. Applicants are judged by a national jury of professional scientists on individual research ability, scientific originality, and creativity. The competition is open to all U.S. high school seniors. Students are encouraged to start their research early—as early as their freshman year—and to participate in local science and engineering fairs before competing in the Intel STS during their senior year. Each of 300 semifinalists will receive a $1,000 award for outstanding science research, and their schools will receive $1,000 for each student named. Forty finalists will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to attend the weeklong Science Talent Institute in March 2007. At the end of that week, 10 Intel scholarship winners will be announced. The top prize is a $100,000 four-year college scholarship.

The deadline to apply is 8 p.m. on **November 14, 2007**. For information, visit **www.intel.com/education/sts/index.htm**.

HARRIS WOFFORD AWARDS

Youth Service America is calling for nominations for the 2008 Harris Wofford Awards, sponsored by the State Farm Companies Foundation. The awards recognize extraordinary achievements in three categories: youth (ages 12–25), organization (nonprofit, corporate, foundation), and media (organization or individual) for actively contributing toward the goal of "making service and service learning the common expectation and common experience of every young person." Winners will be recognized at the 19th Annual National Service Learning Conference in Minneapolis. The youth category recipient will receive a $500 award for him or herself and a $500 award for the non-profit organization of his or her choice. Travel arrangements, including airfare and accommodation, will be provided for each recipient. The deadline to apply is **October 19, 2007**. To learn more, visit **www.ysa.org/awards**.

SENIORS HELPING SENIORS

PNY Technologies is challenging teams of tech-savvy high school seniors to create and execute ideas that improve the lives of senior citizens in their community by introducing them to computer technology that includes PNY electronic products (e.g., Flash media, graphics cards, and RAM memory). This intergenerational experience provides students a venue to connect learning, life, and work, while giving senior citizens the confidence and ability to use technology to take them where their curiosity leads.

The grand prize-winning team will receive $12,500 in scholarship money to be equally distributed among team members. Members of three runner-up teams will each receive a $500 gift package of PNY products. The schools of each winning team will also receive three computers and monitors. High school seniors who are entering a U.S. college, university, or technical center no later than fall 2008 are eligible to participate. The contest ends **December 31, 2007**. Visit **www.pny.com** to learn more or call (800) 769-0143.

SHOW A LITTLE SPIRIT!

Sponsored by Prudential Financial, in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program recognizes students in grades 5–12 who have demonstrated exemplary community service. Schools and officially designated organizations may select one middle level and one high school Local Honoree for every 1,000 students. In February 2008, 102 State Honorees will be selected from the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Each State Honoree will receive $1,000 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., with one parent or guardian, for the National Recognition events May 3–6, 2008. During that time, 10 National Honorees will be announced. Those 10 will receive an additional $5,000 and a $5,000 grant for a nonprofit charitable organization of their choice.

Completed student applications are due to principals or official certifiers by **October 31, 2007**, who must in turn postmark their nominations by **November 7**. For more, visit **www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec_inside.asp?CID=539&DID=48173**.

DOES YOUR CLASSROOM SUFFER FROM BORING PRESENTATIONS?

If you're interested in enhancing classroom presentations—yours and your students'—consider entering the AVerMedia Technologies Inc. annual document camera contest. Document cameras allow you to display documents and small 3-D objects on a screen, television, projector, or monitor. Teachers, administrators, or students may submit a 10–20 minute video describing original and interesting classroom lessons and applications with their document camera. Don't have a document camera? Submit a video describing the difficulty of using traditional presentation technology in the classroom.

You may submit one video per classroom on CD or DVD, mailed to AVerMedia Technologies in Milpitas, California. Four new AVerVision document cameras will be awarded, one to each of the third, second, first, and grand prize winners.

The contest ends **November 15, 2007**. For a full description of the contest, including rules, requirements, and the address to submit videos, visit: **www.avermedia-usa.com/ppd/media/videocontest.html**.

PHOTO: JOCELYN AUGUSTINO

Take Note

ORGANIZE YOUTH BIKE TRIPS FOR FITNESS, FUN, AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Adventure Cycling Association, America's largest bicycle touring organization, has unveiled *Pedal Pioneers: A Guide to Bicycle Travel with Kids*, an A–Z guide to organizing overnight youth bike trips. It's not necessary to be an accomplished bicyclist or touring champion to organize a trip—you just need enthusiasm for kids and bicycling, plus the time and energy to make it happen.

Created with the help of bicycle experts, trip organizers, youth leaders, educators, and safety experts, the 88-page *Guide* walks trip leaders through each stage of organizing a bicycle trip for kids, from creating a trip proposal to choosing meals, including chapters on route planning, bicycle safety and riding techniques, equipment and clothing, hydration and fuel, first aid and health, and group dynamics. The cost is $10.05 for Adventure Cycling members and $15.05 for non-members. General information, including a link to purchase the *Guide*, is at **www.adventurecycling.org/outreach/pedalpioneers.cfm**.

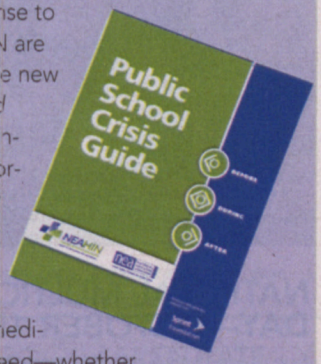
A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship are all traits that strengthen the U.S. economy and ensure our economic success in the global workplace. Recognizing that these traits can help students succeed in life, educators are encouraged to promote them through entrepreneurship education. The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education announces the celebration of the 2nd Annual National Entrepreneurship Week (February 23–March 1, 2008) in support of the importance of entrepreneurship education. The week was recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives in H.R. 699 of June 2006.

Last year's event led to the development of State Leadership Teams in 34 states. Plans are underway to continue providing leadership for each state to build a strong network of organizations supporting the entrepreneurial culture, both now and in the future. A list of state teams can be found at **www.entre-ed.org/E-state%20team08.htm**. Information can be found at **www.entre-ed.org**, including student project ideas, teaching resources, and links to other organizations that support entrepreneurship education.

SCHOOL CRISIS RESPONSE AND RECOVERY GUIDE

NEA and the NEA Health Information Network (HIN) are committed to keeping schools safe and supporting educators, children, and their families. In response to this commitment, NEA and NEA HIN are proud to announce the release of the new *Public School Crisis Guide: Help and Healing in a Time of Crisis*. The extensive, user-friendly guide includes information, tools, and resources on how to prepare for emergencies, respond effectively, and help students and staff recover. Easy to navigate, the *Guide* offers users immediate access to the information they need—whether they are planning for a crisis or in the midst of dealing with one. Highlights of the *Guide* include sample letters for parents and staff, strategies for working with the media, volunteer checklists, and classroom activities. It also offers strategies to enable state and local Associations to lend their expertise and experience during crises.



To download the guide at no cost, visit **www.neahin.org**. Print copies can be purchased through the NEA Professional Library starting in November 2007.

GOOD NEIGHBORS FINISH FIRST

Funded by the State Farm Companies Foundation, 100 Good Neighbor Service Learning Grants of up to $1,000 each are available from Youth Service America for teachers, youth (ages 5–25), and school-based, service learning coordinators to implement service learning projects for National & Global Youth Service Days, April 20–22, 2007. The grants enable youth and educators to bring the positive benefits of service learning to more young people across America. Service learning helps youth build stronger academic skills, foster civic responsibility, and develop leadership ability.

Grant applications must be received by mail by **October 16, 2007** (available to U.S. applicants only). For more information, visit **www.ysa.org/awards**.

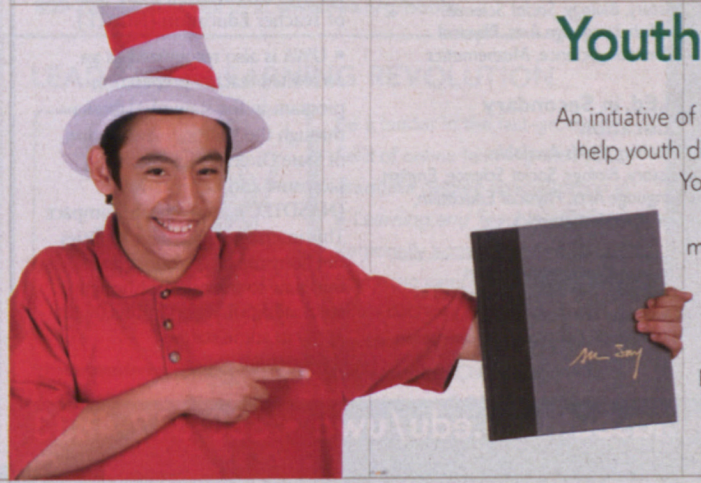


PHOTO: LEN SPODEN

Youth Leaders for Literacy Grants

An initiative of NEA and Youth Service America (YSA), Youth Leaders for Literacy Grants help youth direct their enthusiasm and creativity into reading-related service projects. Young people age 21 or younger can apply, both individually or as a group. Applications should propose youth leadership in developing and implementing a literacy project that begins on NEA's Read Across America Day, March 3, 2008, and culminates on YSA's Global Youth Service Days, April 25–27. The proposal must include a scheduled activity (e.g., read-aloud session, trip to the library, bookmaking, etc.) for each week of the project period. Twenty grants of $500 each will be awarded, with winners announced in January 2008. The application deadline is **October 27**. For more information and to read about last year's winners and their projects, go to **www.nea.org/readacross/volunteer**.

NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY DAY—OCTOBER 15

For more than a decade, educators have celebrated National Multicultural Diversity Day (NMDD) on the third Monday in October. Created by Cleorah Scruggs, a fourth-grade teacher in Flint, Michigan, the day was adopted as a national event by the 1993 Representative Assembly to "increase awareness of the tremendous need to celebrate our diversity collectively."

You can get involved just by being creative. Start by sharing cultural information with your class about yourself, then introduce students to multicultural issues by inviting a local expert to talk about diversity. You can also sing songs that celebrate diversity and ask students to bring in items or food representative of their ethnic heritage to share with classmates.

To help educators share ways to celebrate diversity year round, NEA sponsors an electronic discussion board at **www.nea.org/cs/forum.jspa?forumID=55**. For more information on the day, go to **www.multiculturaldiversity.org**.

OCTOBER IS NIEMANN-PICK DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

Unless someone close to you has been diagnosed with Niemann-Pick Disease (NPD), you probably haven't heard of this rare set of genetic pediatric disorders that typically affect children of elementary school age.

NPD is characterized by an enzymatic deficiency that affects metabolism and leads to malfunction of major organ systems and deterioration of the nervous system. NPD is progressive, degenerative—and until a cure is found—always fatal. Symptoms usually appear in children between the ages of 4–10, although they can appear later in life.

The National Niemann-Pick Disease Foundation supports and promotes research to find treatments and a cure, and provides support services for children and families. Go to **http://nnpdf.org** for more information.

Teen Read Week, October 14–20

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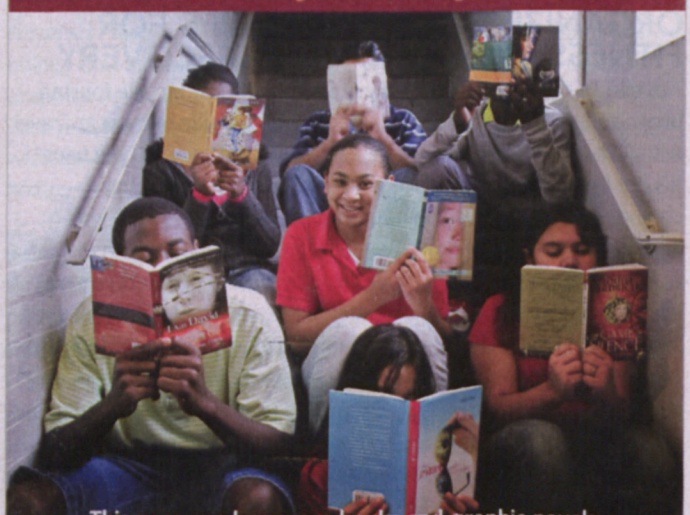

This year, use humorous books and graphic novels to encourage young adults to read! For more, visit www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenreading.htm.

Sign up to receive the latest news, information, and tips about reading from NEA's Read Across America and our partner organizations. It's easy! Just send a blank e-mail to join-nea-raa-enewsletter@list.nea.org.

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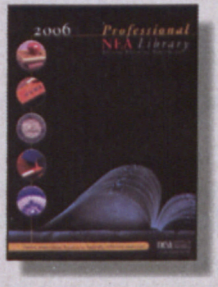

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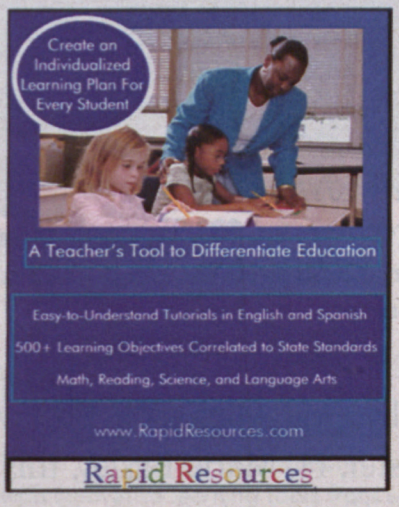
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www.teachingtolerance.org/neagrants

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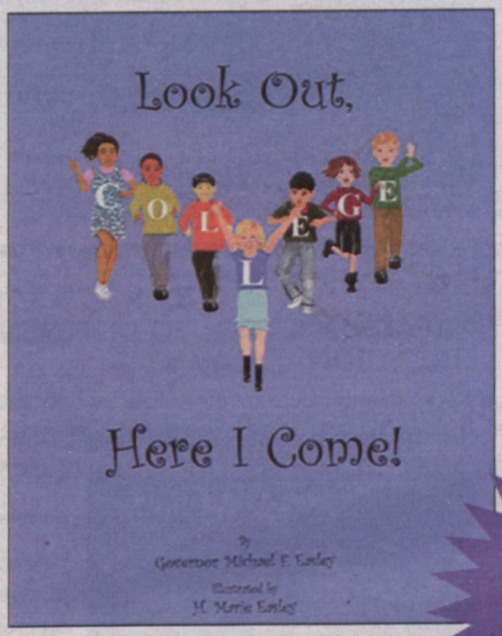

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Reg Weaver, NEA President

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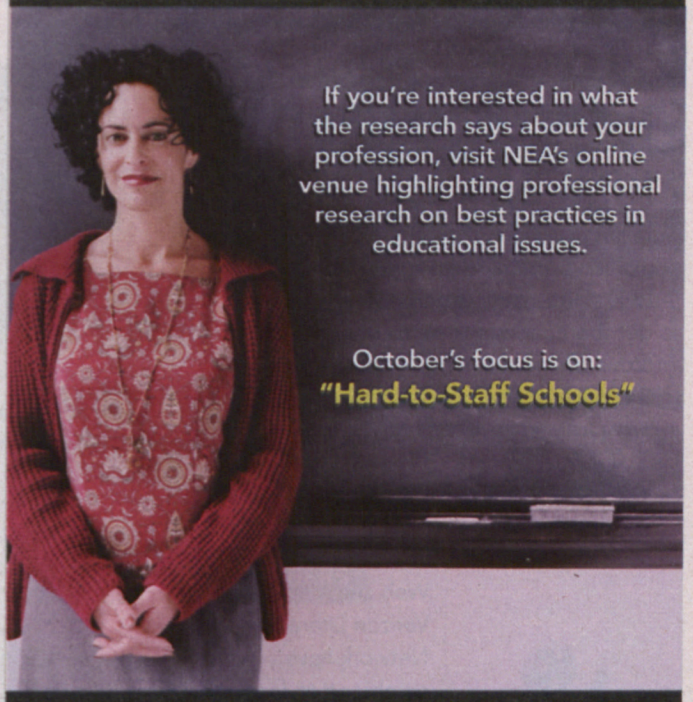
Attention Deficit Disorder: the Unfocused Mind in Children and Adults by Dr. Thomas Brown, assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine, is a scientifically up-to-date text that dispels myths and provides insights into and practical recommendations for managing ADD/ADHD in children and adults. Case histories from Brown's practice illuminate the syndrome and how it is best treated. 360 pp. $27.50 from Yale University Press. Visit www.yalepress.com.

A HOMAGE TO WORDS AND STORYTELLING

Max's brothers collect stamps and coins, but they won't share. In a moment of inspiration, Max decides to collect words. From magazines and newspapers he cuts them—big words, little words, as many as he can find. Soon Max has enough for a story, and it isn't long before his brothers are interested, too. What is his story about? You'll have to read *Max's Words*, by Kate Banks, to find out. Ages 4–8. 32 pp. $16 from Farrar, Straus and Giroux. For information, go to www.fsgkidsbooks.com.

Teaching Research Spotlight



If you're interested in what the research says about your profession, visit NEA's online venue highlighting professional research on best practices in educational issues.

October's focus is on:
"Hard-to-Staff Schools"

Learn more at www.nea.org/ref?octresearch

Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

RETIREMENT—CLOSER THAN YOU THINK?

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Don't forget that NEA members also enjoy a 10 percent discount and free shipping on in-stock classroom and teacher supplies from the **NEA Classroom SuperStore**, provided through Classroom Direct. To help you even further, your purchases are recorded in an online history so you can easily file your teacher expense deduction at tax time. Order online at **www.neamb.com/Classroom** or call toll-free **(800) 248-9171** and mention offer code NEAMB.

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On the Web

INTERESTED IN TEACHING ONLINE?

Good courses require good teachers. Although online teaching shares much with face-to-face instruction, it also requires a unique set of skills. NEA's new *Guide to Teaching Online Courses* provides an overview of an effective online education system, focusing on the skills teachers need, professional development to get there, and models to evaluate and improve online teaching. And it's free! Go to **www.nea.org/technology/images/onlineteachguide.pdf** to download.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES FOR LEARNING

The MarcoPolo Web site and Verizon Literacy Network have combined to form Thinkfinity—a Web site of educational content created by renowned organizations who are experts in their fields, e.g., the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Content areas include arts integration, economics, geography, the humanities, science, mathematics, reading, and language arts. K–12 lesson plans, reviewed Web sites, student materials, interactive activities, assessments, and training materials can be found here at no cost, but registration is required. Go to **www.thinkfinity.org**.

STAYING SAFE IN CYBERSPACE

"PointSmart. ClickSafe." is a new multimedia initiative coordinated by the National Cable Telecommunications Association (NCTA) and Cable in the Classroom (CIC) to help families and children make appropriate choices and stay safe while using the Internet. The cornerstone of the effort, **www.PointSmartClickSafe.org**, provides a variety of materials—including an online "guidebook" and video vignettes—offering simple instructions, tips, and scenarios that can help parents and caregivers teach children to make good choices about Internet use. Educators may also find much of the site's information helpful.

GLBT History Month

NEA believes that a great public school is a fundamental right of every child. For a school to be great, it must be free from intimidation and harassment. During Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) History Month in October and throughout the year, these free NEA resources will be useful to educators and parents working together to create schools where all children can learn and thrive.

Strengthening the Learning Environment: A School Employee's Guide to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. A guide for Association members and staff who may confront issues involving gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students or colleagues. **www.nea.org/takenote/glbtguide06.html**

Focus on Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transgendered Persons. This brochure examines our understanding of the achievement gaps for this vulnerable population. **www.nea.org/teachexperience/achievgapfocus0405.html**

Safe Schools for Everyone. An interview with Kevin Jennings of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network. **www.nea.org/neatodayextra/safeschools.html**

The Safe Zone. A page with links to bullying resources, a brief glossary of bias terms, and a downloadable poster. **www.nea.org/schoolsafety/safezone.html**

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On TV

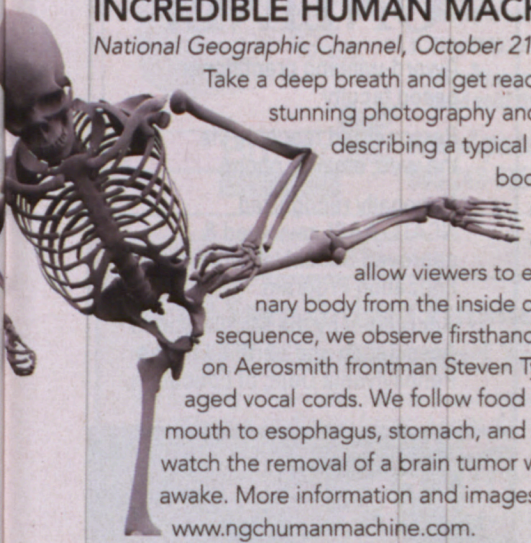
THE WAR

PBS, Wednesdays 10/3, 10/10, 10/17, 10/24, 10/31, 11/7 & 11/14, 9 p.m. ET/PT. Check local listings. Note: PBS airs the last two segments in early October and will replay the entire series in October and November.

Don't miss this major Ken Burns undertaking on World War II. The war changed every family and city in America. Profiled are folks on the homefront in Mobile, Alabama; Sacramento, California; Luverne, Minnesota; and Waterbury, Connecticut. Letters and dispatches describing how war affected life at home are juxtaposed with scenes of gritty action overseas. Battlefronts in Europe and the Pacific are featured, with rare color footage of often explicit battle scenes. Note: Teachers may want to view the series before showing to students. A viewer's guide, video clips, and more are available at www.pbs.org/thewar.

INCREDIBLE HUMAN MACHINE

National Geographic Channel, October 21, 8 p.m. ET/PT.



Take a deep breath and get ready for two hours of stunning photography and clever graphics describing a typical day in the human body. Generated by 4-D ultrasounds and MRIs, cutting-edge visuals allow viewers to explore the extraordinary body from the inside out. In an amazing sequence, we observe firsthand as surgeons operate on Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler, repairing damaged vocal cords. We follow food as it travels from mouth to esophagus, stomach, and small intestine; and watch the removal of a brain tumor while the patient is awake. More information and images are available at www.ngchumanmachine.com.

AMERICAN MASTERS: GOOD OL' CHARLES SCHULZ

PBS, October 29, 9 p.m. ET/PT. Check local listings.

Was there a real Lucy, Linus, and Charlie Brown? Watch this portrait of America's most famous cartoonist to find out. "Sparky" Schulz was born in 1922, served in World War II, and received many rejection slips until October 1950, when his luck changed and *Peanuts* ran in seven newspapers. By the time Schulz died in 1999, the strip was running in more than 2,600 papers across the globe. But it was his unique approach to everyday life that made those kids—and one dog—so memorable and distinctly American.

On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org, and Cable in the Classroom Magazine at www.ciconline.org.

PHOTOS SKELETON: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION; SCHULZ: ASSOCIATED PRESS

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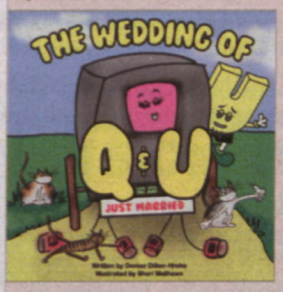
BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS

THE WEDDING OF Q AND U

By Denise Dillon-Hreha



How would you feel if your friends didn't include you in their games because you just don't "fit in?" One day in Syllable City, the letter "Q" faces this very situation. Distraught but determined, Q decides to find a partner, one who will stick with her through thick and thin. Guess who fits the bill? Lucky "U!" Q and U have the wedding of the season, and their partnership makes possible words that are critical to the English language. Young readers will remember the "qu" combination by the time they finish reading this fun and funny book. For kindergarten and early elementary students. 45 pp. $10.60 from AuthorHouse Publishers. Go to www.weddingofqandu.com to order.

DREAM REAL: A TOP SPORTS AGENT'S TIPS FOR TEENS SERIOUS ABOUT "GOING PRO"

By Eugene Napoleon and Michael D'Amato

Primarily the memoir of an exceptional man, *Dream Real* recounts the life of a professional athlete turned classroom teacher and sports agent. Born to a single mother and raised in the Jersey City Projects, Eugene Napoleon refused to be defined by low expectations, and succeeded academically as well as on the college gridiron. After an injury cut short his professional career, Napoleon rethought his goals and decided to use his experience and positive attitude to teach students how to succeed through perseverance. Note: the book contains mature themes. For teens and adults. 136 pp. $13.95 from iUniverse, Inc. Available online at www.barnesandnoble.com.

Diversity Calendar

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 1–31—CZECH HERITAGE MONTH
Celebrate the rich legacy of Americans of Czech descent and their many contributions to American culture. Learn about Czech language and culture at www.bohemica.com.

OCTOBER 1–31—ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE MONTH
Honor the many achievements, contributions, and successes of Americans of Italian descent. Find out more at http://italian.about.com/library/blniahmspecial.htm.

OCTOBER 1–31—POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
Join an estimated 10,000,000 Polish Americans in celebrating their special month. Read a history of Poles in America at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_American.

OCTOBER 1—BIRTH OF COMMUNIST CHINA
In Tiananmen Square in 1949, Chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China, saying that the "Chinese people have stood up!"

OCTOBER 2—THURGOOD MARSHALL SWORN IN TO SUPREME COURT
In 1967, Marshall became the first African American to sit on the highest court in the land. Opposing discrimination and the death penalty, he championed free speech and civil liberties. Visit www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/reference/articles/thurgood_marshall.html for more.

OCTOBER 3—FRANK ROBINSON SIGNS AS MAJOR LEAGUE MANAGER
In 1974, Robinson became the first African American to manage a major league baseball team when he was hired by the Cleveland Indians.

OCTOBER 6—GERMAN AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY
The U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany maintains a Web site with information about the history of Germans in America at http://usa.usembassy.de/garelations8300.htm.

OCTOBER 8—COLUMBUS DAY (DISCOVERERS' DAY)
The Mariners' Museum has information about Columbus and his voyages at www.mariner.org/educationalad/ageofex/columbus.php.

OCTOBER 31—TRICK OR TREAT FOR UNICEF DAY
From trick-or-treating door-to-door to hosting fundraisers with their schools and communities, kids have collected more than $132 million for UNICEF, saving and improving the lives of children around the world. For information, visit www.unicefusa.org/trickortreat.

PHOTO: CORBIS

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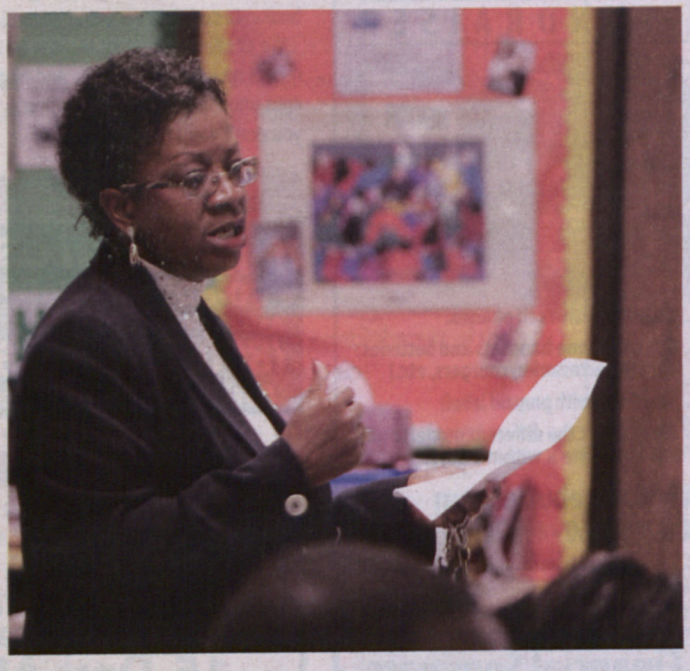
A WAY FORWARD

How to attract accomplished teachers to high-needs schools—and keep them there. BY MARY WARD



I TEACH IN ONE OF North Carolina's "low-performing" schools. I believe there is a way forward for my children, but it isn't the path of high-stakes testing that we are following so doggedly now.

I do not want to write about think tank research or scholarly articles. The research on children in poverty offers little practical assistance for me. I stare into the faces of the living data every morning as students enter my Accounting and Principles of Finance classes.

I did not realize how deep my frustration lines were until I found myself in self-defense mode with family members. They would look at me and say, "How many more years before you can retire?" My first response was always, "I love teaching." But the stress of working in this school under the testing regime is wearing me out.

Before high-stakes testing turned our school upside down, my students spent their time working on real-world problems and projects developing knowledge and skills that could help them survive as adults. The high-stakes tests do not measure this kind of learning. Instead, my students are pressured to recall facts and data without the context that make them meaningful.

> "Come visit my school if you think the field is level."

This testing takes away hope because the sought-after outcomes do not take into account the deficits carved into the souls of my children. Society blames me and their other teachers for what students don't know, with little regard for what they come to me with. The testing is premised on a level playing field. Come visit my school if you think the field is level.

Many do come. State's Assistance Teams, Turn-Around Teams, Local Assistance Teams. They include wonderful people who can't erase the barriers that have built up in layers on my students: a mother on crack; a father serving a life sentence; a home without hot running water. But we are far from powerless. I believe we can reach these students if we give them accomplished teachers, consistently, year after year.

I like to think I am such a teacher. But I know many skilled, dedicated teachers who are not willing to come work in schools like mine. The real high-stakes question is: What would change their minds?

There are many parts to the answer but I want to focus on one vital piece: the prospect of working in a creative, professional learning community. That's what can make a good teacher wake up every day and want to rush to school.

When accomplished teachers consider moving to a school that is low-performing, they are more concerned with leadership than with the possibility of encountering irate parents or disinterested children. But building a professional learning community takes a certain kind of principal. Not everyone can do it. Too often, inadequate teachers pick up administrative certificates and wind up in leadership positions. If they were ineffective teachers, they will not be effective teacher leaders.

Even an excellent teacher will not automatically make a good principal. The school leader must know how to nurture staff initiative and parent involvement while still keeping a strong hand on the tiller. She or he must organize mentoring and professional development that help staff grow and implement programs for at-risk students that keep them on track. The leader must see the vital need to combine community resources and parental involvement to accomplish school goals.

Surveys by the Center for Teaching Quality show that poor working conditions and a lack of teacher empowerment are among the top reasons teachers leave.

So how can we move ahead? Not with more tests, but by developing forward-thinking, energetic school leaders who can build professional learning communities, school by school. If we do that, I believe my students and others like them will ignite like a torch and burn with an enthusiasm for learning that will carry them to a better life.

Mary Ward is a National Board Certified Teacher in rural Halifax County, North Carolina, and a member of the Teacher Leader Network and the Governor's Teacher Advisory Committee. Read the Center for Teaching Quality's research at www.teachingquality.org.

PHOTO: JASON IVESTER

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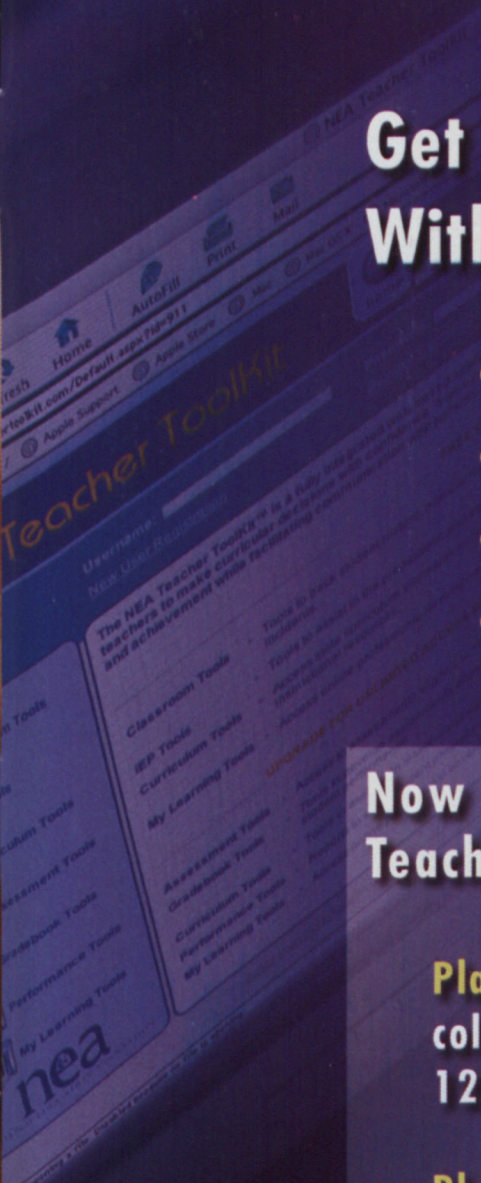

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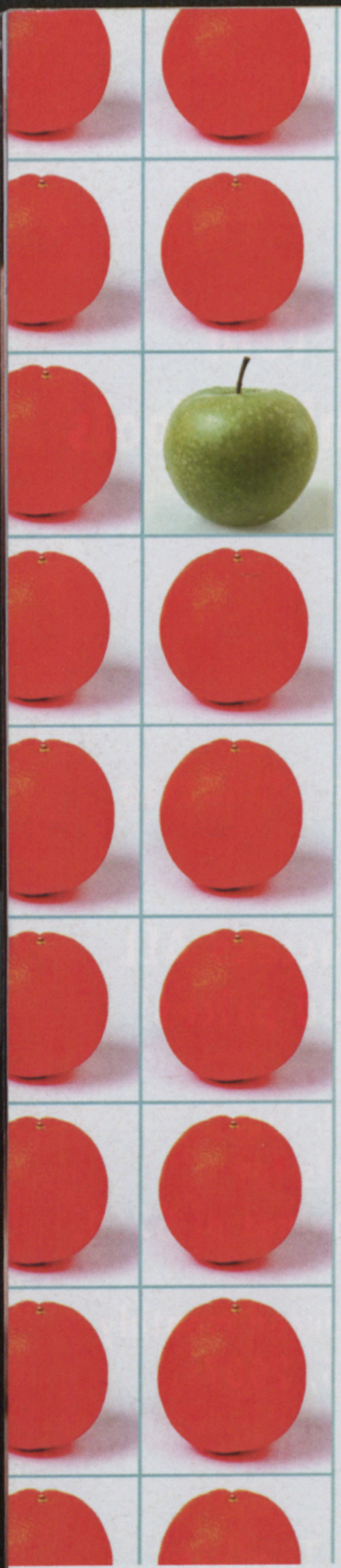

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